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~~VN. 4. 22.~~

NA. 2.

7524

FROM
THE LIBRARY
OF
SIR WILLIAM OSLER, BART.
OXFORD

BILLINGS (JOHN S[HAW]) 1839-1913.

7524. In English, on paper: written about
1887: 5 x 8 in., iii + 75 leaves.

'On literary research in Medicine with a list of a few books which are specially useful in such research. By John S. Billings M.D.' An 'Appendix' (foll. 31-73) contains the chronological list of books. Only the titles (foll. iii, 31) and fol. 69 are in Billings's hand. Written on one side of the paper.

Published in 1887, with title 'Methods of research in medical literature, with a list [&c.]', in Trans. Assoc. Amer. Phys., vol. 2, pp. 57-67, and in Boston Med. and Surg. Jnl., vol. 116, pp. 597-600.

I do not know how this came into my possession.
Wm. Osler.

* This is the MS. of Billings's lecture to the Association of American Physicians, Washington, 2 June, 1887 - pr. as 'Methods of research in medical literature' (Trans. Assoc. Am. Phys., Phila, 1887, ii, pp. 57-67; and Boston Med. & Surg. Jour., 1887, cxvi, pp. 597-600).

The J.H. Hospital was not then opened.

Robt. 11/1/27.

On literary research in Medicine ⁴² No. 5
with a list of a few books which are
specially useful in such research.

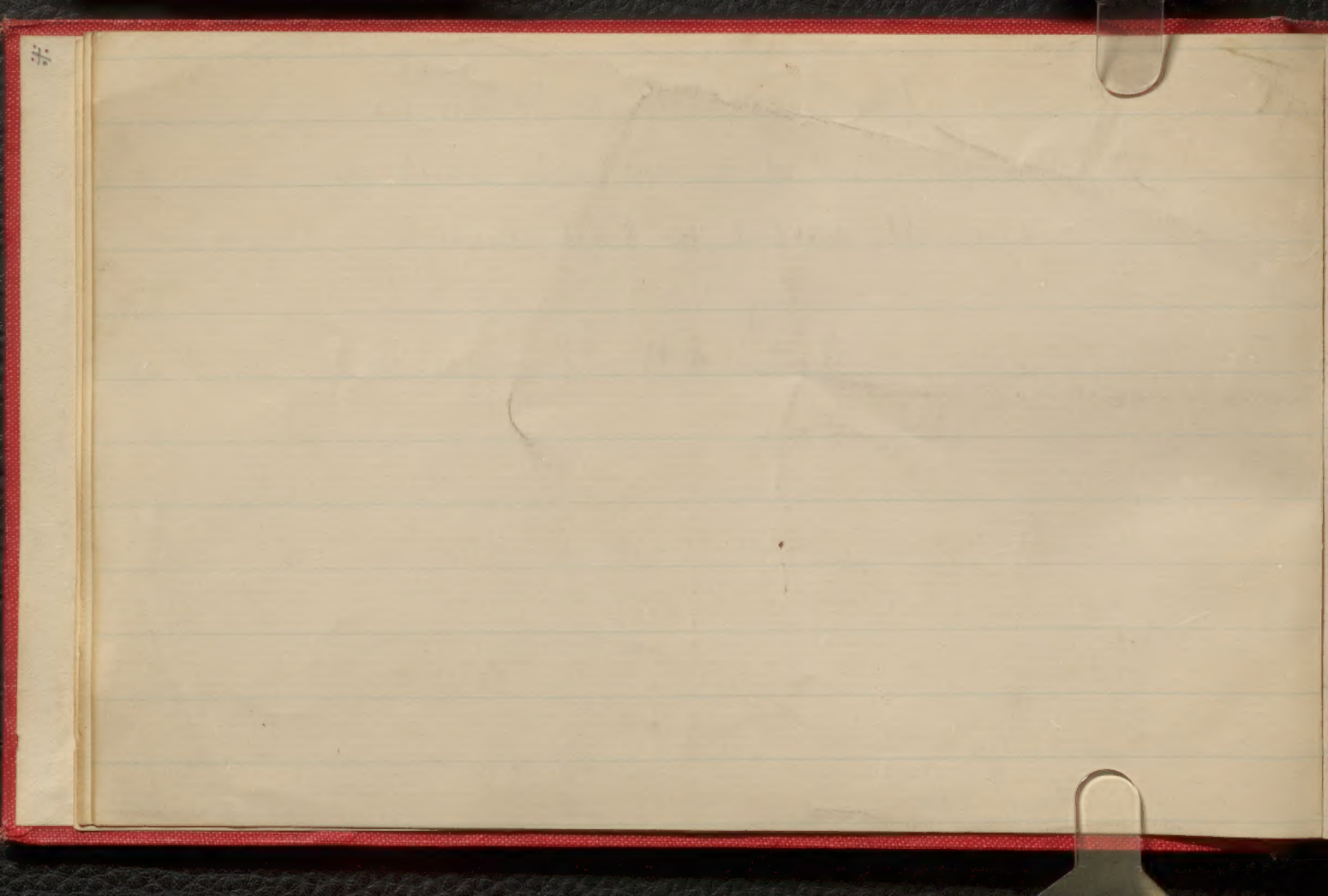
by
John S. Billings M.D.

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← *

note

This paper was read by Dr. Billings at one of the early meetings of the Johns Hopkins
Hospital Historical Club. I ~~do~~ not know how it came into my possession.
W. Osler



When I promised to speak briefly at this meeting on Medical Bibliography it was not because I had anything new to say on this subject; but because it seemed possible that a few remarks might start a discussion by the medical writers and teachers of this association as to the methods which they have found useful and as to what they think can be and should be done here to facilitate this kind of research.

From the days of Galen to the middle of the 17th century bibliographical work was the most important business of the medical teacher. The great

The first thing I noticed when I stepped
 out of the car was the cool breeze.
 It felt like a warm blanket after a long
 drive. The sun was just setting, and the
 sky was a beautiful mix of orange and
 purple. I took a deep breath and
 smiled. This was exactly what I needed.
 A moment of peace and quiet. I walked
 along the path, feeling the grass under my
 feet. The sound of the leaves rustling
 was so soothing. I had found a little
 piece of heaven.

majority of the writers of the middle age busied
themselves, not so much with observation of facts,
or with experimental inquiry, as to seeking to find
out what Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, and
other old masters had said about the matter.
When the discovery was made that in order to deter-
mine the precise anatomy of a part, the function
of an organ, or the results produced by a disease,
it was best to look for ones' self instead of con-
sulting the fathers, and when this discovery had
become popularized, bibliographical and historical
research fell for a time into neglect. Within the last



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fifty years, however, there has been a revival in interest in the collection of medical libraries and in historical research, which last has become a necessity in many cases if one would avoid doing useless work.

Attempts to learn what has been done, or said, or thought, by our predecessors, are due to widely different needs, and may be pursued by widely different methods. A specimen of subjects with regard to which bibliographical work is most frequently called for, I give the following:

I. To gather and compare the records of all reputed cases of particular forms of abnormality, disease, or injury.



The rarer and more anomalous the abnormality or the disease the more important it is to find the widely scattered records.

II. To obtain statistical data with regard to the circumstances affecting the prevalence of a certain disease, the relative frequency of particular symptoms, and the comparative merits of different modes of treatment or the results of special operations.

III. To obtain information as to details of methods which have been tried in experimental physiology, pathology, or pharmacology, and as to the results, in order to avoid waste of time in devising apparatus, or in



trying methods which have been already found useful,
or to obtain suggestions as to new modes of exper-
imentation.

IV. To trace the origin and development of medical
organization in a particular city or country, or to
gather materials for a biographical sketch of
some celebrated physician, or for the history of
a medical society.

V. To obtain data for a comparison of the laws
and customs of different countries affecting medical
education, or the right to practise, or the care of the
insane, or public hygiene, &c.



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In literary research for biographical purposes, or to trace the development of theories or institutions, the work must be done mainly by the writer himself; and while, at the commencement he may be greatly helped by systematic works of medical Bibliography, he will soon find himself wandering off into all sorts of curious by-paths and out of the way corners into which he is led by obeying the Golden rule for this kind of work, viz., "Verify your references." In the first book which he consults he will probably find two or three references which will indicate to him as many different books or articles which he will wish to

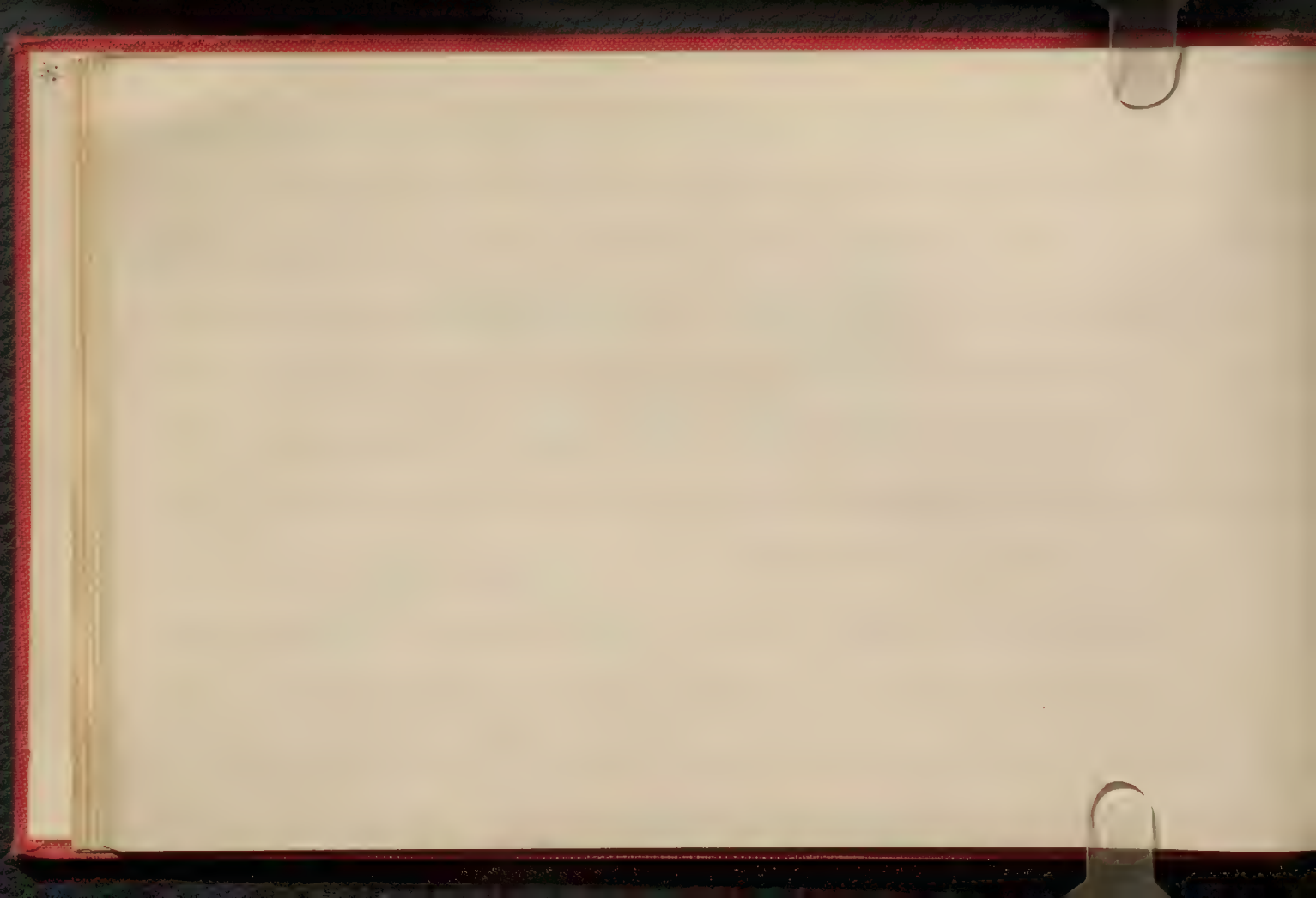


consult. When he gets these such of them will prob-
ably give a few more references to be hunted up in
like manner.

7
Meantime, it will not be an unprecedented
or very remarkable occurrence if in the course of his
reading he stumbles over several very interesting points
not precisely connected with his original quest; but
still having some relation to it, and which it
seems a pity not to look up while he is about it,
so he makes notes of these, and of the references
connected with them, and sends for a fresh lot
of books. He finds also that some of his quotations



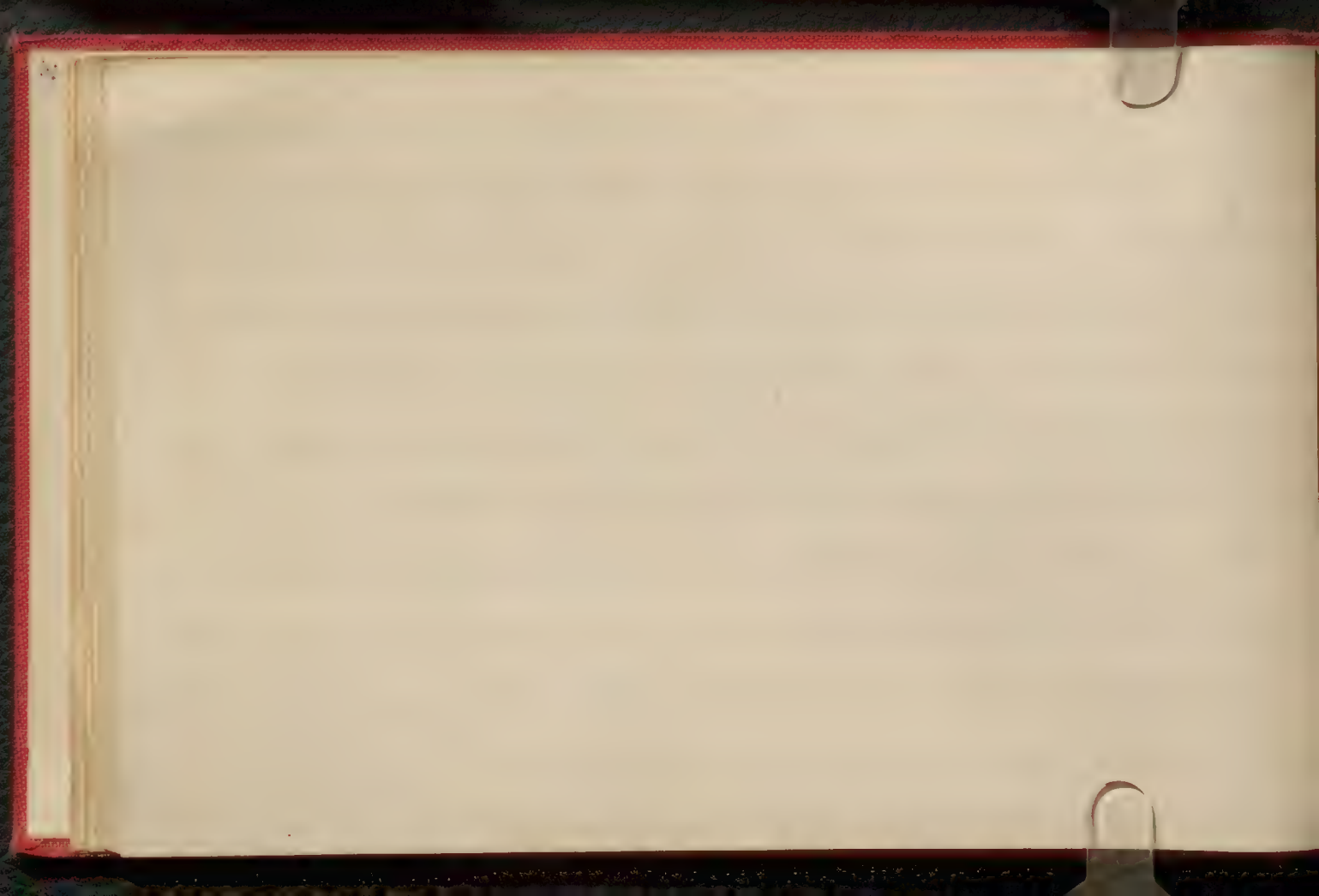
are erroneous; that "Some one has blundered," or
plagiarized, and proceeds with a sense of refresh-
ment to hunt down the culprit. And so the
work expands, for as Tufelsdröckh remarks,
"any road will lead you to the end of the world."
To those who like this sort of literary work
it has great fascination, and there are few
educated men who do not enjoy a short bout
of this kind if they have time and facilities for
it. From a strictly utilitarian and merely
pecuniary point of view the results of such biblio-
graphical excursions are not usually very remunerative,



but they afford capital mental exercise, ^{and} occasionally result in the production of some really interesting and valuable additions to medical literature.

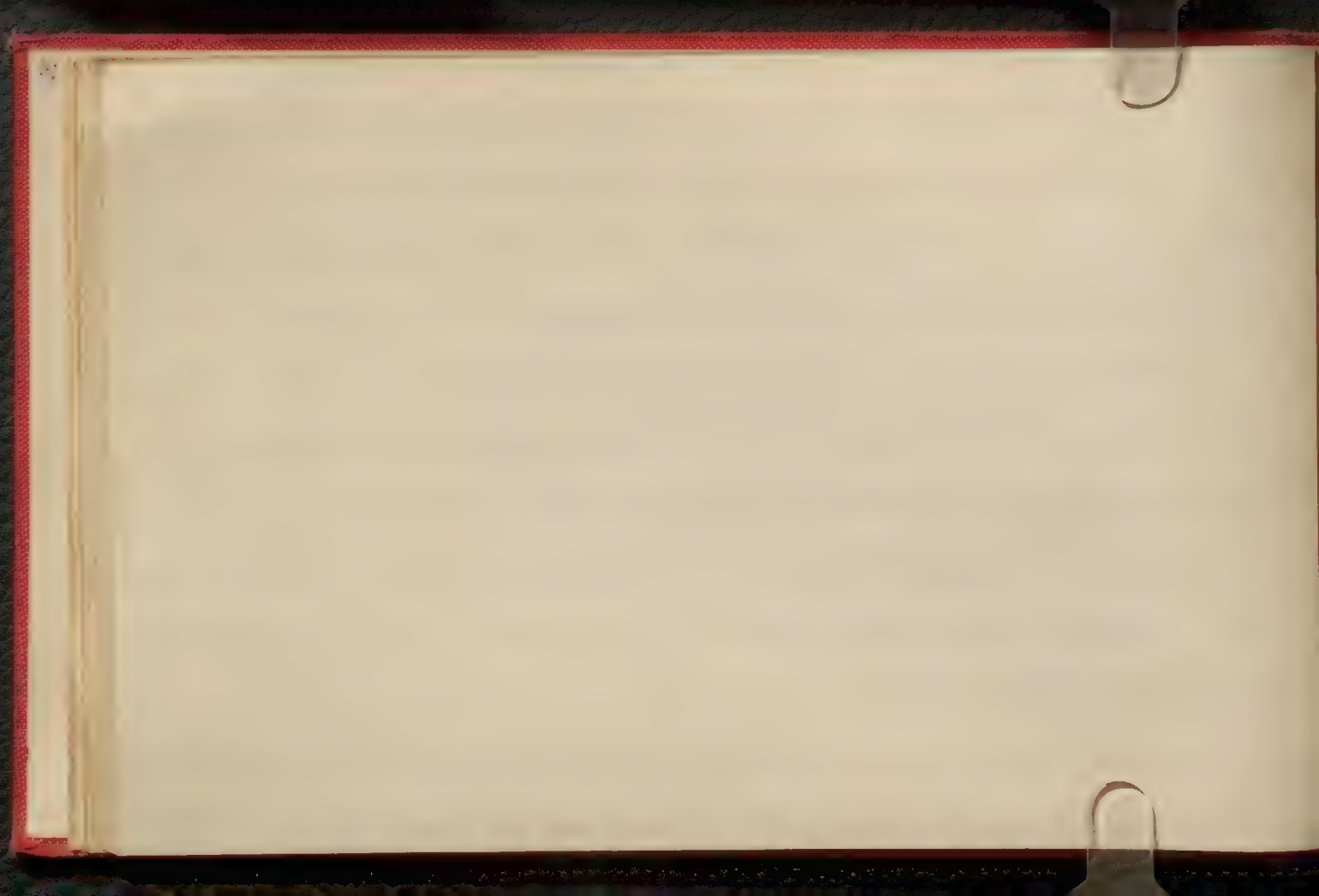
Men engaged in this kind of research do not usually, except just at first, care much about subject catalogues or indexes; they know what books they want to see, and the catalogue which interests them most frequently is a catalogue of authors in alphabetical order. The questions which they ask of the Librarian are something like the following:

Have you got such a book in the Library?



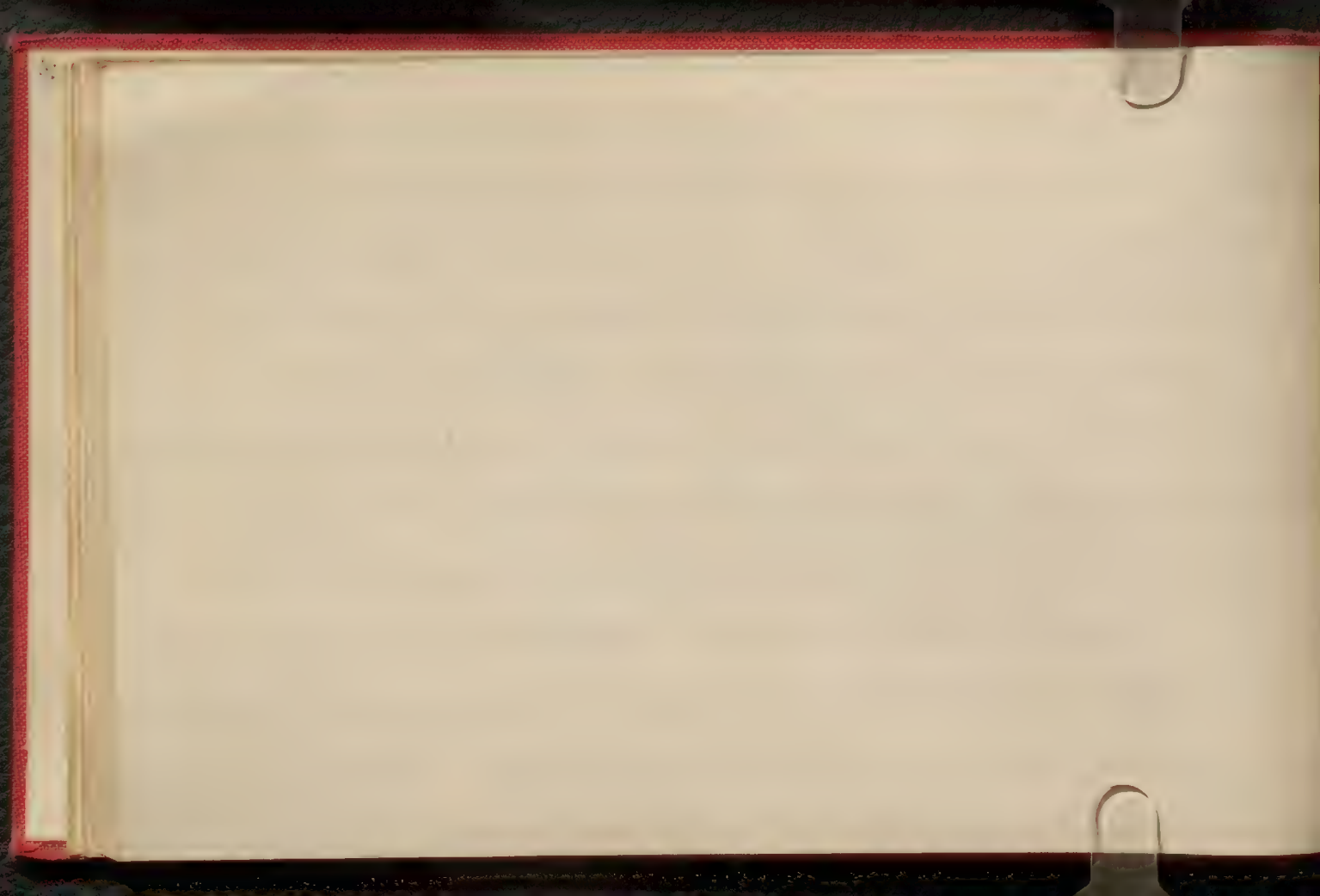
10
He is the author of a book having such a title?
John Smith published a book about such a date; what is its
title? I want to see all the books that Peter Brown
wrote or edited. How many editions were published
of Jones' Surgery, and what translations were made
of it? When did the Chic Medical Repository
begin and end and who were its editors? These
are all simple questions which almost any physician
can answer for himself by the aid of good ordinary
author catalogues.

If the question is as to a collection of laws
regulating medical practise in Brussels, or the

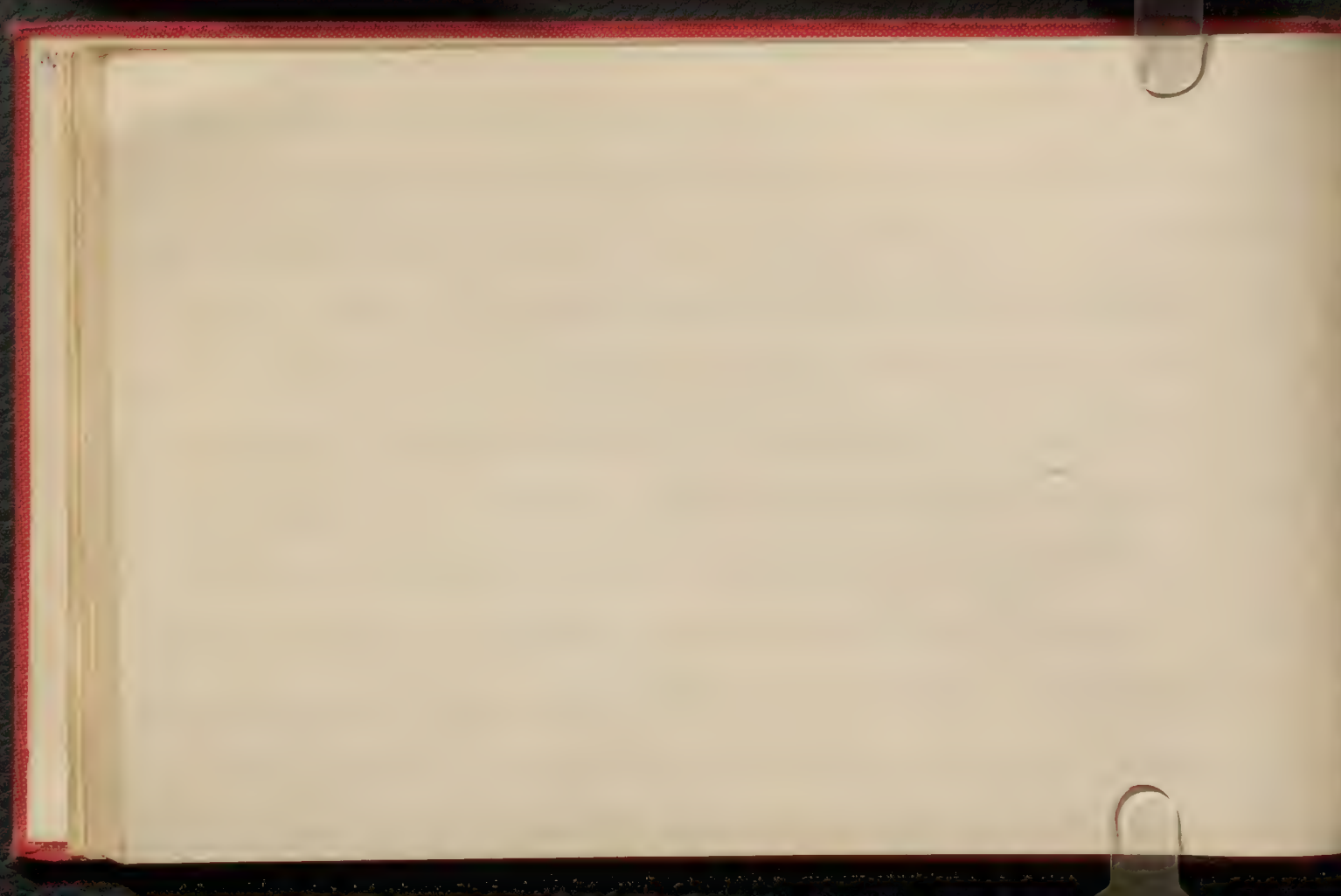


number of Supplements to the catalogue of the New York Hospital, some physicians might be troubled a little to find the desired information in an author catalogue, not knowing the rule that a government or corporation is considered to be the author of its laws, reports, etc., and that, therefore, Belgium is the author of the first book and the New York Hospital of the second.

But while a simple alphabetical catalogue of authors will serve many purposes in bibliographical research, and is, perhaps, the one most used by the Librarian, there are many points on which it

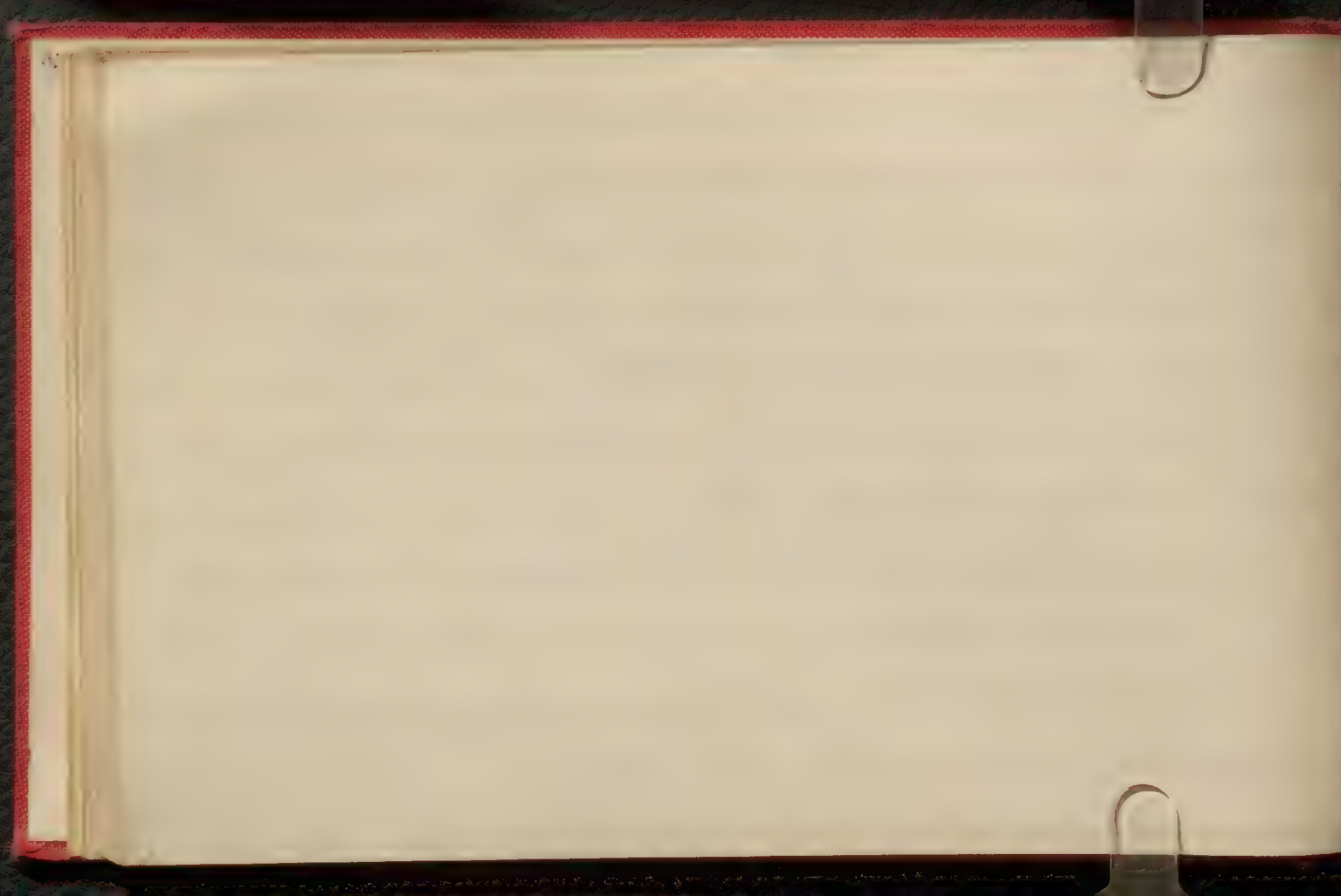


fails to give the desired information, and for which
bibliographical lists or subject catalogues are
desirable. And just here a few definitions may
be useful. By a bibliography I mean a list
of titles of books and of references to articles or
paragraphs which relate to the subject in hand.
By a critical bibliography I mean a list in
which shall be indicated those books or articles
which are of real value as containing some addition
to knowledge. In many, perhaps most cases, such
lists are best published in chronological form,
thus indicating the successive dates on which new



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information was given; but in making them, the use of
separate slips or cards, arranged in alphabetical
order, is the most convenient. The more complete such
lists can be made the more valuable they are; but
after too much time is wasted in attempts to make
them absolutely perfect. The great thing to be
kept in view is to make them accurate as far as
they go, and one of the best means of doing this
is to indicate distinctly for each title quoted as
to whether you yourself have or have not seen and
examined the book.

It should be constantly borne in mind that the



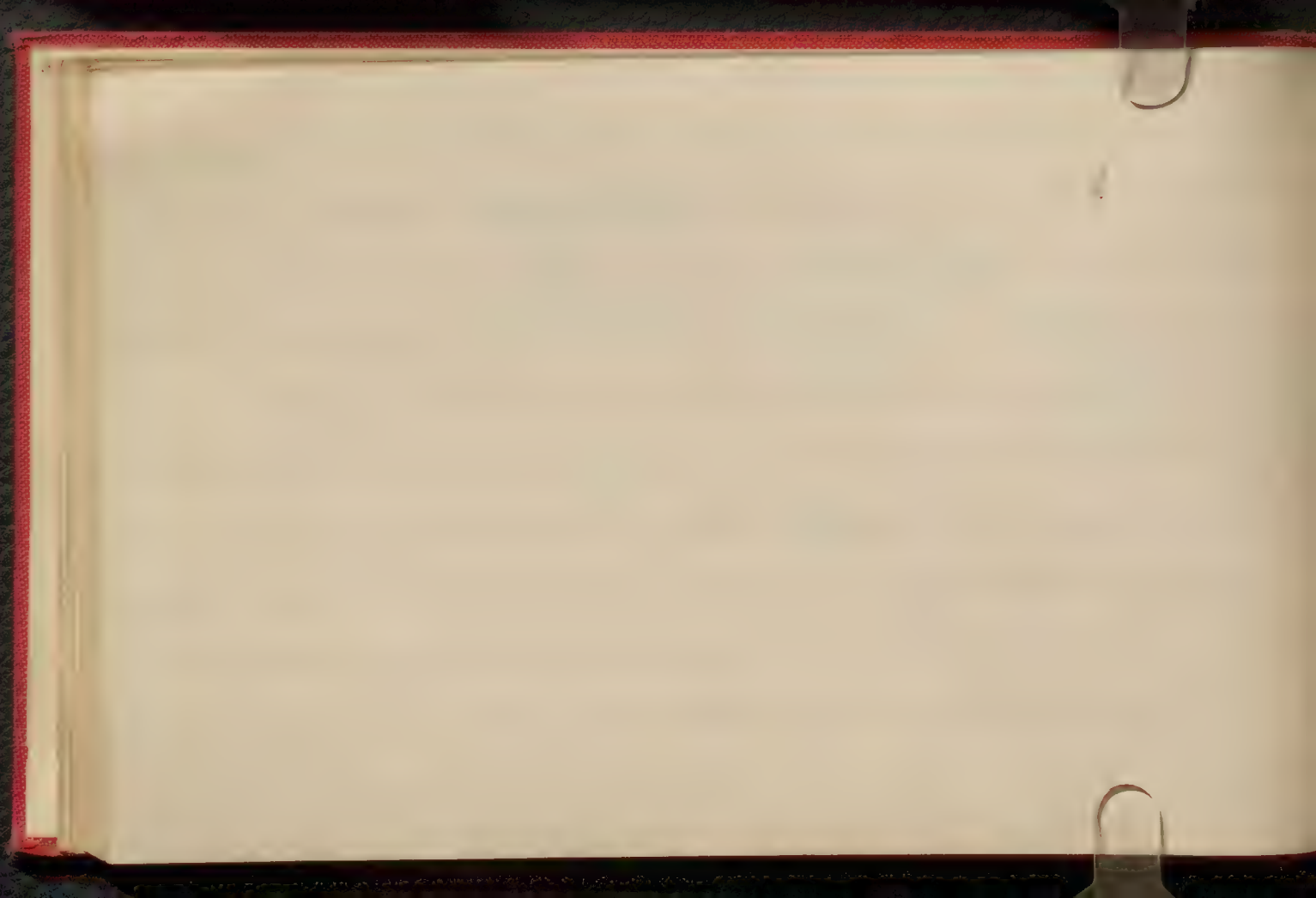
proper object in giving bibliographical lists is, not to impress the reader with the extent and variety of the author's research, but to give him the means of verifying the author's statements, and of pushing the research further. It is analogous to giving details of methods used in an experiment in physiology. Hence the references given should not be too condensed; they should be so clear that from them it shall be easy to find the books, and for this reason I ask your attention to the desirability of using an uniform system of abbreviations of titles of journals and transactions in referring to them, and venture to suggest that the



Set of such abbreviations given at the beginning of Volume VII of the Index Catalogue may be found, useful for this purpose.

I have elsewhere called attention to the essential differences between Medical Bibliography, properly so called, and subject catalogues of particular libraries. No matter how large and complete a medical library may be, its subject catalogue can never form anything like a satisfactory medical bibliography. It only makes a good foundation for one.

On the other hand when you wish to use lib-



lists prepared by others you have usually much difficulty in finding some of the books referred to, while the references which you do find in a subject catalogue of a given library, can at all events be verified, by visiting that library. The labor of preparing bibliographical lists, and of research, after one has been furnished with such a list, is, in many cases, very considerable, and such work can usually only be carried on to advantage in a large library.

As this is preeminently an age of division of labor it is natural to apply this principle also to bibliographical research. There are many cases



in which what may be called mechanical bibliog¹⁷-
raphy and literary research may be used to excellent
advantage, and the field for this kind of work
will expand in the future. It is especially ap-
plicable in those cases, indicated in a preceding
part of this paper, in which it is desired to compare
the records of cases and operations and to prepare
statistics. It is often much better for the busy
practitioner to have this work done for him than
to attempt to do it himself, and especially is this
the case if he does not easily read other languages
besides his own. It is true that by employing others



18.
to do such work he loses both pleasure ^{and} instruction,
but the field of professional work and study is
now so wide that it is impossible for any one man
to cover it all, and he must be content with coop-
erative effort. It is also true that such work
is not only sometimes expensive, but that it is often
difficult to tell beforehand what it will cost. There
are several physicians in Washington who are willing
to undertake work of this kind in the Library of
the Surgeon General's Office for physicians at a
distance who cannot conveniently visit this city, and
their charge for such work, hunting up references, making



abstracts, translations, etc., is one dollar per hour.

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You can readily see that there can be no very definite relation between the time occupied and results produced; a half page abstract may require two hours to prepare, or it may be done in ten minutes, and sometimes it may cost less to purchase a pamphlet than to obtain an abstract of it in this way. Nevertheless the demand for this kind of work is steadily increasing, and a supply will arise to meet the demand.

In order to obtain satisfactory results from bibliographical work done in this way, it is necessary that the points to be looked up shall be stated as concisely,



and as precisely, as possible; in other words that the 20
person who requests the search shall know clearly what
he wants. I have elsewhere called attention to this
by quoting the warning which is printed on the title
page of the Washington City Directory, viz.: "If you
want to find a name in this directory you must know
how to spell it," which is the same as the old Latin
proverb "qui nihil offert, nihil refert."

When I receive a letter stating that the writer is
about to prepare a paper for his county medical society,
that he has selected for his subject - tumors of the liver;
or - locomotor ataxy - or the causes of insanity in modern



times, - and that he would be glad to have us compile
a list of references as possible to all articles, reports of
cases, or statistics connected with these subjects, - and that
his paper must be prepared in two weeks, - I know of course
that what he wants is one of the recent encyclopaedias of
medicine, and advise accordingly. The problem is
not always so simple, however, and I must confess, that
I am sometimes very much puzzled as to what to reply
to some of the queries which I receive. Nevertheless,
we are all learning gradually how to use medical libraries,
and in a few years more I predict that the wonder will be
how we ever got on without them.



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I have here a few of the books which are most used in this Library for subject references, a list of which is appended to this paper. I ~~will~~ include in this list the catalogues of certain libraries, for reasons already given. For other valuable works consult, in the Index Catalogue, the headings "Bibliography Medical," "Biography Medical," and "Medicine, History of."

With regard to the Index Catalogue of this Library, with which you are all more or less familiar, I may say that its most important defects are those of omission; that is, the failure to give, under subject headings, all the references to books and articles actually in the Library



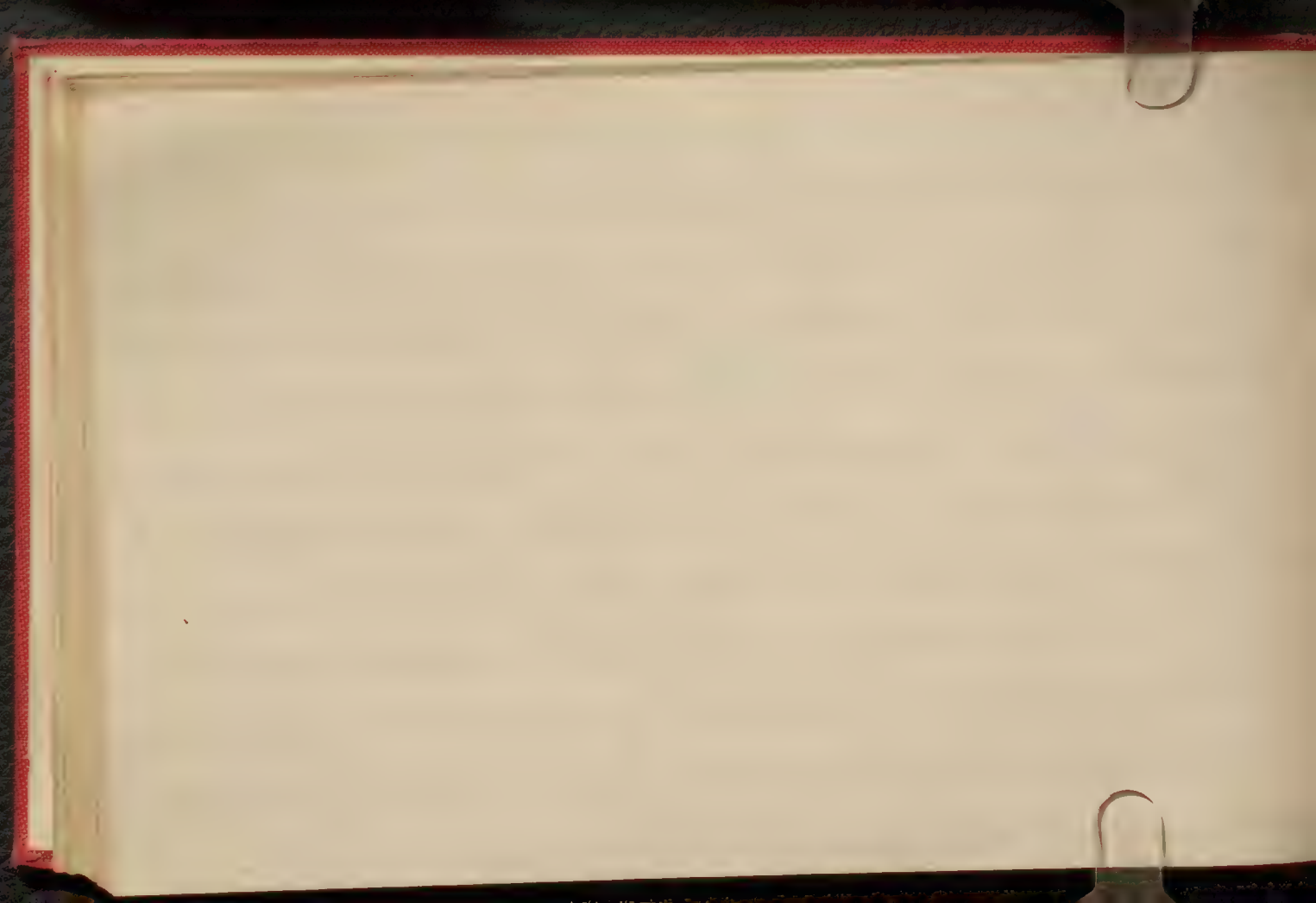
which really belong there, and it requires a little practise to enable one to get the best results from it. There are many books and journal articles which different men would classify under different heads, and in most cases when one consults the Index for a particular subject he finds more references than he cares to be bothered with, although the list is almost always incomplete owing to the fact that we have not yet obtained all the medical books which have been printed. We are, however, making fair progress in this direction. I think we now have over three-fourths of all medical books which have any special value or



interest, and at least two-thirds of all the medical literature which has been printed.

In consulting the Index on any given subject it will usually be found possible to select from the rather formidably large mass of titles those which are most likely to be of interest by giving a little attention to author's names, to the place and date of publication, and to the number of pages and plates, if it is a journal article.

The cross references should be consulted, and under the headings to which these will guide you will often be found new cross references which should also be looked up.



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Since the year 1800 about one-half of the medical literature which has been published consists of medical journals and transactions. Nine-tenths of the demands made on this Library are based on references to this class of literature, and it is therefore of the greatest importance in medical bibliography.

The number of medical journals and transactions now received by this Library, excluding those devoted to pharmacy and dentistry, is over 700, and it has been steadily increasing for the last five years.

If we take Ploucquet's *Literatura Medica digesta* to be as complete an index of the medical literature



in existence at the beginning of this century as the ²⁶
Index Catalogue, is of the medical literature now in
existence, it is evident that the number of references has
more than quadrupled during the present century.
Nine-tenths, at least, of it becomes worthless and of
no interest within ten years after the date of its pub-
lication, and much of it is so when it first appears.
Of that which is really new and good, a large part
is pretty promptly made use of by systematizers and
compilers; but there is also a considerable portion, which
we cannot use in our present state of knowledge but
which may become valuable building material hereafter.



To get this roughly sorted out, classified and labelled,²⁷
so that it can be found when wanted, is the object
of indexing; to bring it into use is the object of
bibliography.

One of the most useful pieces of work which could
now be undertaken for the benefit of medical writers and
investigators would be the preparation of a dictionary of
critical bibliography of medical bibliography, in
which should be indicated, for each subject, in
alphabetical order, a reference to where the best bibliographies
relating to that subject can be found. This could only be well done by
the cooperation of a number of writers, each taking a separate field.



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I have not attempted in this brief paper to eulogize bibliography, or to comment on the desirability that there should always be a few men interested in the study of the history and literature of medicine. I think that you will all agree with me that they may be sources of much pleasure, and that this alone is a fairly good reason for giving them some attention, and for exerting the influence of the profession to make it possible, in at least one place in this country, to carry out such studies with a full supply of material.

And while the Librarian is, in one respect, only a sort of ped carrier who brings together the bricks



made by one set of men, in order that another set of men²⁰
may build therewith, - he is apt to take quite as much
pride and satisfaction in the resulting structure,
provided it be a good one, as if he had built it
himself; and he has constantly unrolling before
him a panorama which, though at times a little
monotonous, contains as much wisdom, humor and
pathos, as any other product of the human intellect
with which I am acquainted.



3
Professor Huxley remarks that: "There is assuredly no more effectual method of clearing up one's own mind than by talking it over, so to speak, with men of real power and grasp who have considered it from a totally different point of view. The parallax of time helps us to the true position of a conception, as the parallax of space helps us to that of a star." 1

~~It is not enough, however, to consider simply what physicians have said or done. To isolate the history of medicine, and to attempt to contribute~~
1 Fortnightly Review, 1874, XVI, n.s., p. 556.



Appendix . List of books arranged in
order of date of publication, which are specially
useful in Medical bibliographical research.



von Kaller (Albertus).

Bibliotheca botanica. Qua scripta ad rem herbariam
facientia a rerum initiis recensentur.

2 v. XVI, 654, 785 pp. 4°.

Figuri, apud Orell, Gessner, Fuesli, et soc., 1751.

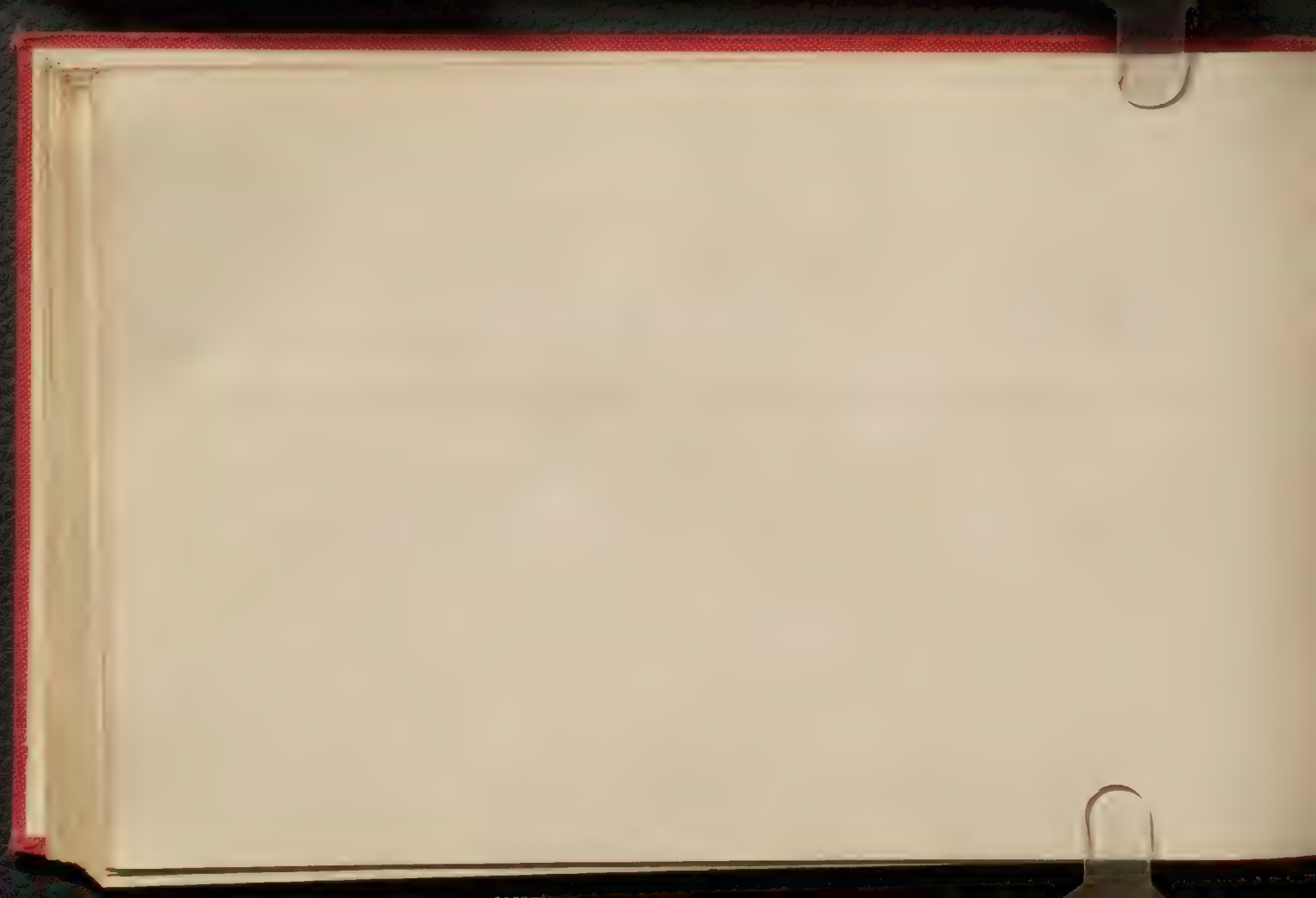


Haller (Albertus).

Bibliotheca chirurgica. Quae scripta ad artem
chirurgicam facientia a primis initiis recensentur.

2 v. IV, 593 pp.; VIII, 695 pp. 8°.

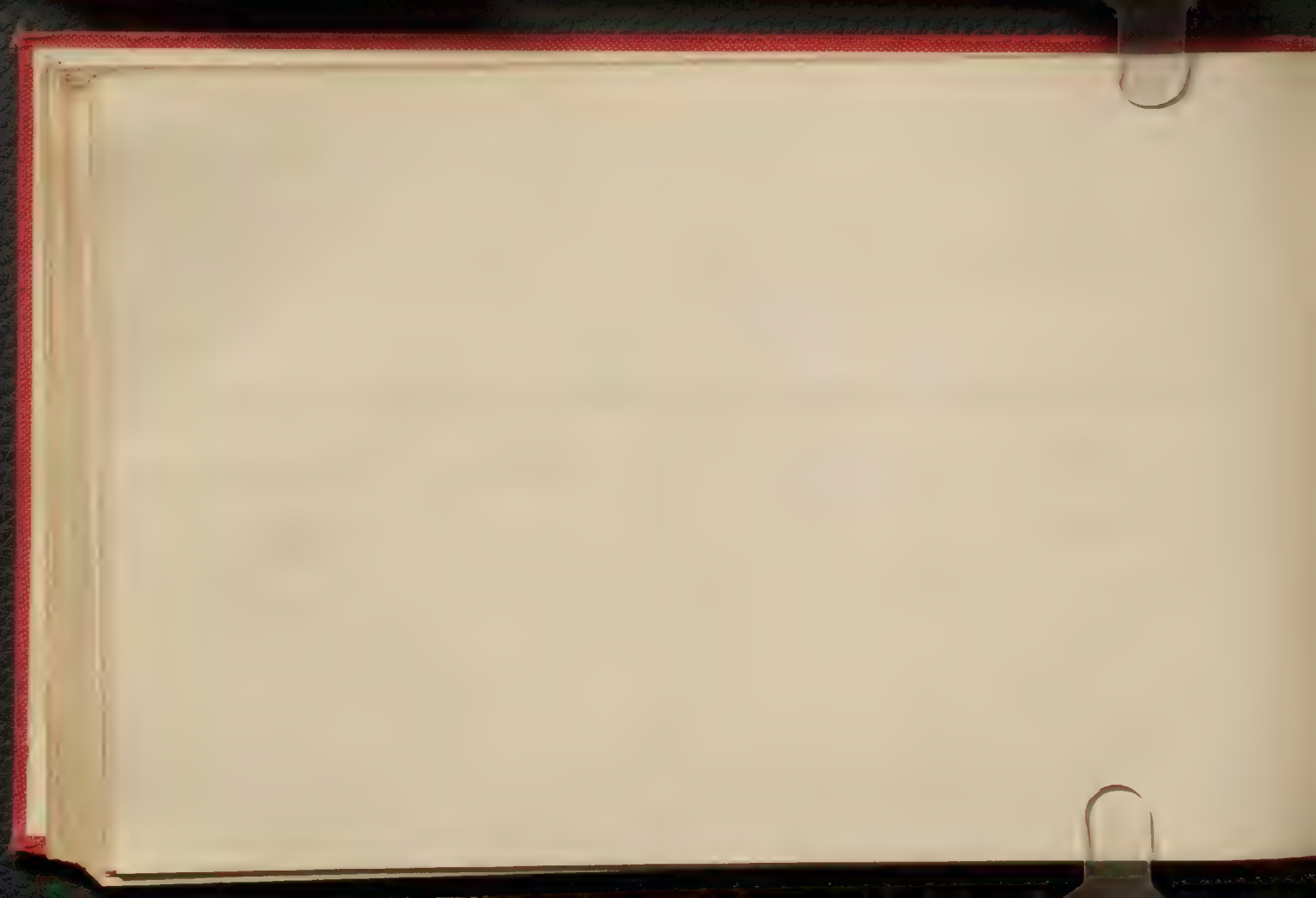
Perthae et Basiliæ, Haller et Schweighauser, 1774 5.



Haller (Albertus).

Bibliotheca anatomica. Qua scripta ad anatonem
et physiologiam facientia a rerum initiis recensentur.
2 v. VIII, 816, 870 pp. 4°.

Figuri, apud Orell, Gessner, Fussli et soc., 1774-7.



Haller (Albertus).

Bibliotheca medicinæ practicæ qua scripta ad
partem medicinæ practicam facientia a rerum
initiiis ad a. 1775 recensentur.

4v. 4°. Basileæ, Joh. Schwinghauser; Bernæ, apud
Em. Haller, 1776-8.

Tom. IV. Ex ejus schedis restituit, auxit et edidit Joach.
Dietrich Brandis ab anno 1686 ad a. 1707.



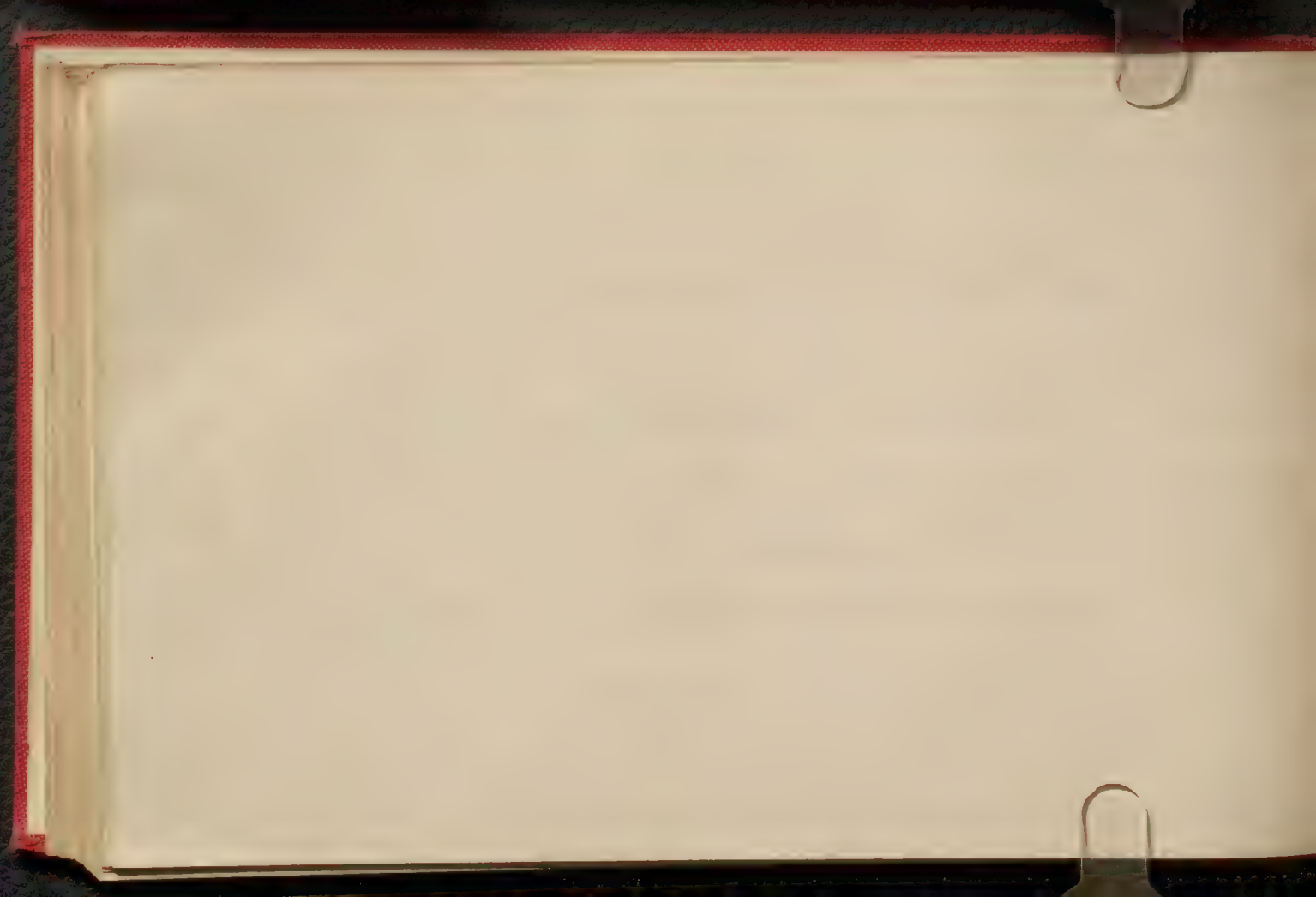
Heffter (Joh. Carolus).

Museum disputatorium physico medicum
tripartitum. Ed. nova.

4 pts. in 2 v. 4°.

Lectiones disputatorum, sumt. Schroepsianis, 1763-4.

1. ed. of v. 1 was in 1756.



de Ploucquet (Guilielmus Godofredus).

Literatura medica digesta sive repertorium
medicinæ practicæ, chirurgiæ atque rei
obstetriciæ.

4 v. in 2. 4.^o Tubingæ, J. G. Cotta, 1808-9.



Biographie médicale [par A. J. L. Jourdan].

7 v. 8°.

Paris, Panckoucke, 1820-25.



Watt (Robert).

Bibliotheca britannica; or a general index
to British and foreign literature.
4v. 4°. Edinburgh, A. Constable & Co., 1824.



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Rezeimeris (Jean-Eugène), Allivier et
Raige-Declorme.,

Dictionnaire historique de la médecine ancienne
et moderne, ou précis de l'histoire générale, techno-
logique et littéraire de la médecine, suivi de la
bibliographie médicale du dix-neuvième siècle, et
d'un répertoire bibliographique par ordre de
matières.

4 v. in 7. 8°. Paris, Béchet jeune, 1828-39.



à Roy (Cornelius Henricus).

Catalogus bibliothecae medicæ.
5 v. 8.

Amstelodami, L. Van Es, 1830.



Callisen (Adolph. Carol. Petr.)

Medicinisches Schriftsteller-Lexicon der jetzt
lebenden Aerzte, Wundärzte, Geburtshelfer, Apo-
theker und Naturforscher aller gebildeten Völker.
33 v. 8°. Copenhagen u. Altona, 1830-45.



Jahrbücher der in- und ausländischen
gesamten Medicin. Hrsq. von Carl
Christian Schmidt.

v. 1 - 40, 1834 - 43. roy. 8°
Leipzig, O. Wigand.

Continued as: Schmidt's Jahrbücher.

v. 41 - 213, 1844 - 87. roy. 8°
Leipzig.



Forbes (John).

A manual of select medical bibliography
in which the books are arranged chronologic-
ally according to the subjects, [etc.]

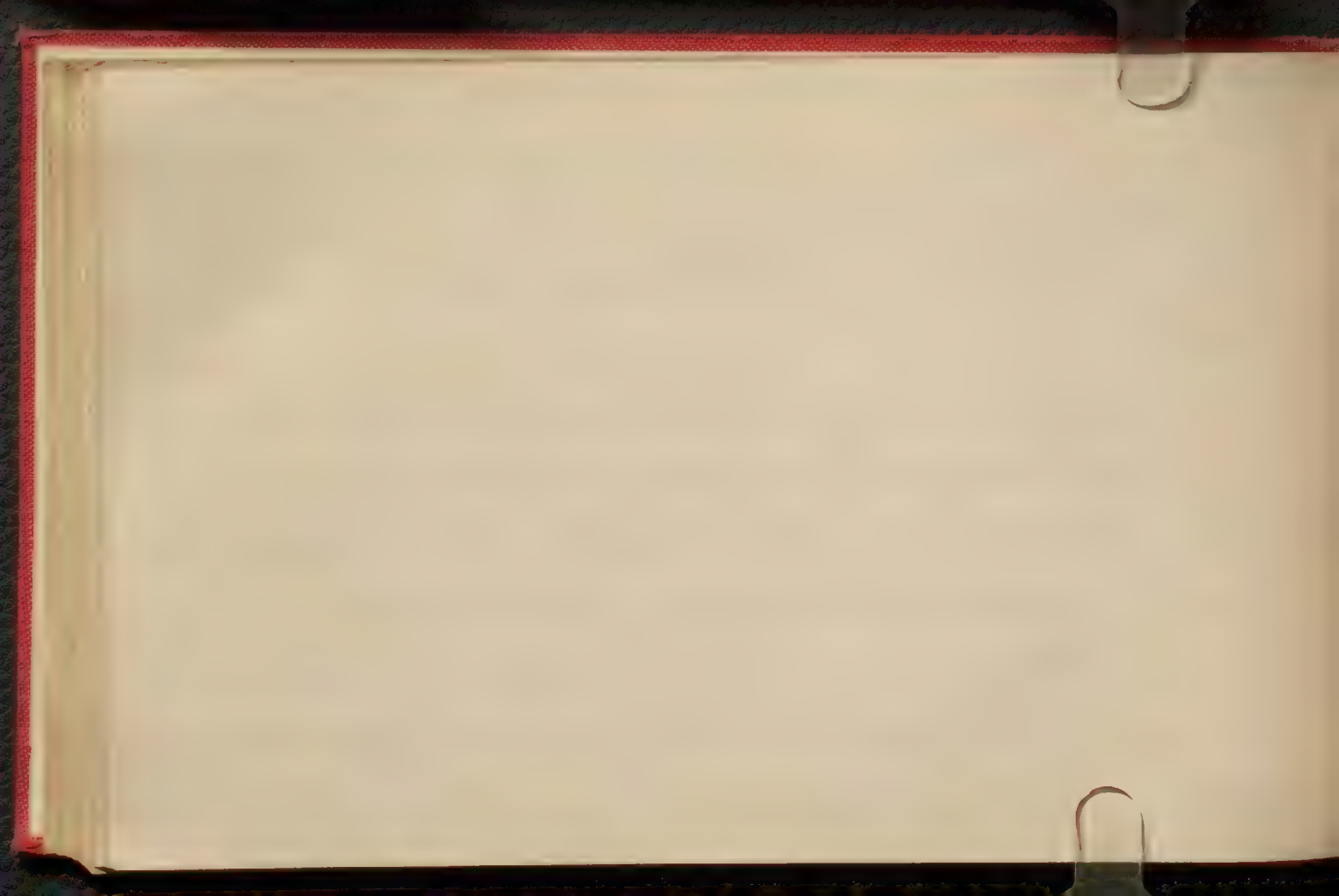
VIII, 403 pp. 8°.

London, Sherwood, Gilbert & Piper, 1835.



Choulant (Joh. Ludwig).

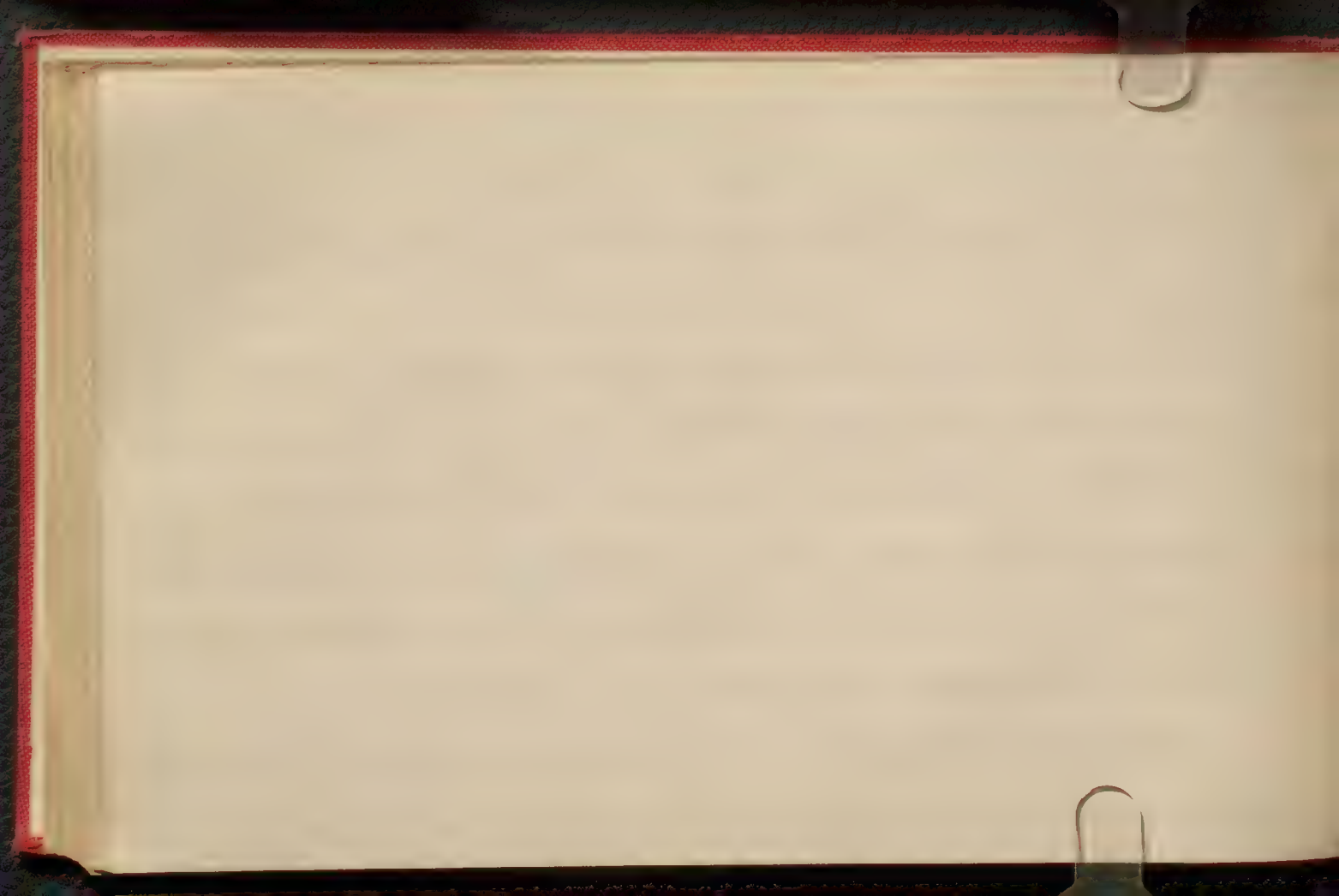
Handbuch der Bücherkunde für die ältere
Médecin zur Kenntniss der griechischen, lateinischen, und
arabischen Schriften im ärztlichen Fache und zur biblio-
graphischen Unterscheidung ihrer verschiedenen Ausgaben,
Übersetzungen und Erläuterungen. 2. Aufl.
xxi, 434 pp., 1 l. 8°. Leipzig, V. Voss, 1841.



Holtrop (Leonardus Stephanus Augustus).

Bibliotheca medico-chirurgica et pharmaceutico-chymica,
sive catalogus alphabeticus omnium librorum, disser-
-tationum, etc., ad anatomicam, artem medicam, chemi-
-cam, botanicam, physico-medicam et veterinariam
pertinentium, et in Belgio ab anno 1790, ad annum
1840 editorum. Curante L. S. A. Holtrop.

xviii, 427, 199 pp. Hagae-Comitis, C. Fuhr, 1842.

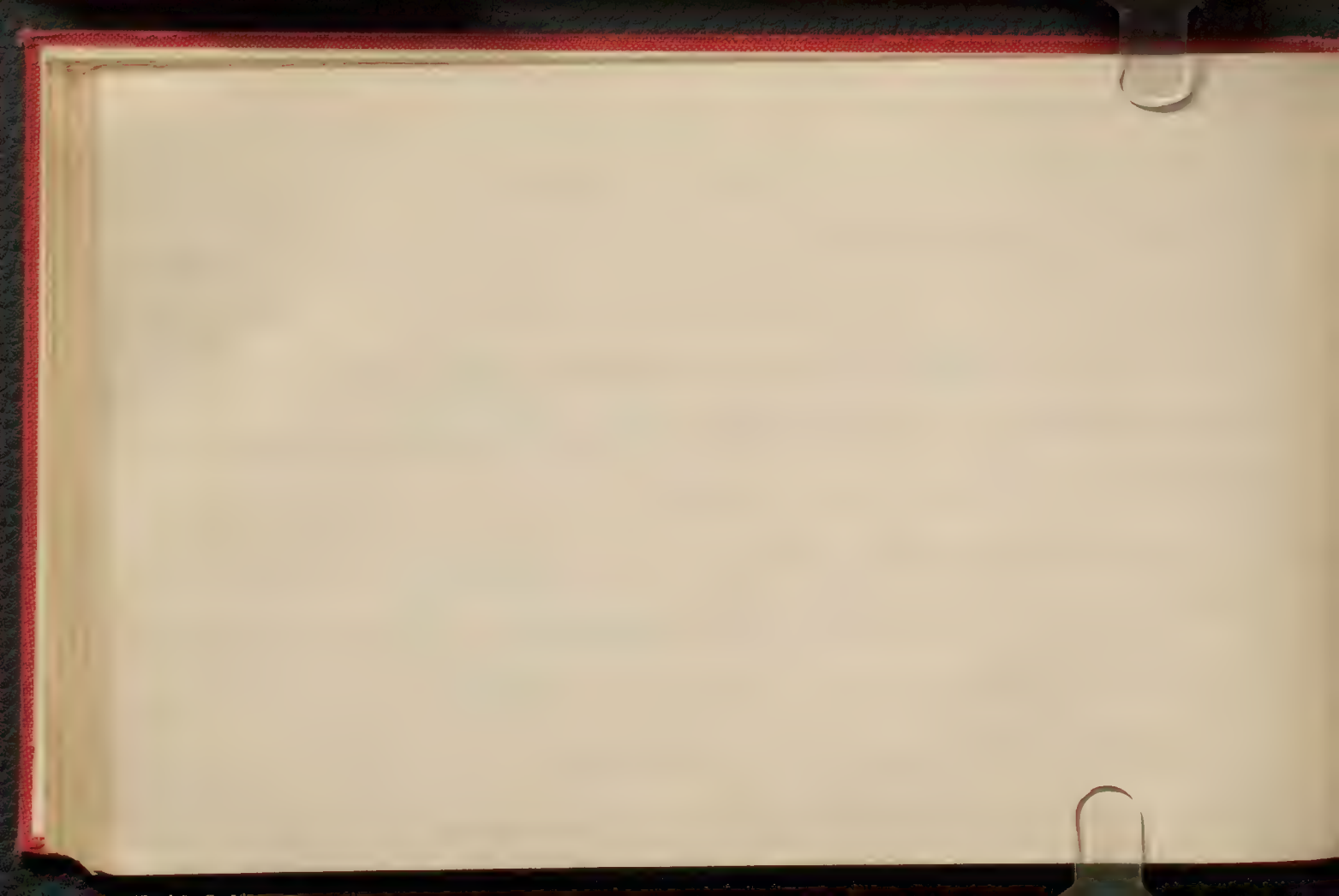


Shoulart, Ludovicus.

Bibliotheca medico historica sive catalogus librorum
historicum de re medica et scientia naturali
systematicus.

x, 269 pp. 8°.

Lipsiæ, sumpt. G. Engelmann
1842.



Classed (A) Catalogue of the books contained
in the Library of the Royal College of Surgeons
in London.

LXII, 1171 pp. 8°

London, J. Scott, 1843.



Bibliotheca medico-chirurgica pharmaceutico-
chemica et veterinaria oder geordnete Uebersicht
aller in Deutschland neu erschienenen medicinisch-
chirurgisch-geburtshilfflichen pharmaceutisch-chemi-
schen und veterinär-wissenschaftlichen Bücher.

Hrsg. und verlegt von Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht
in Göttingen. Jan. 1847 - Sept. 1886.

8. Göttingen, 1847-86.

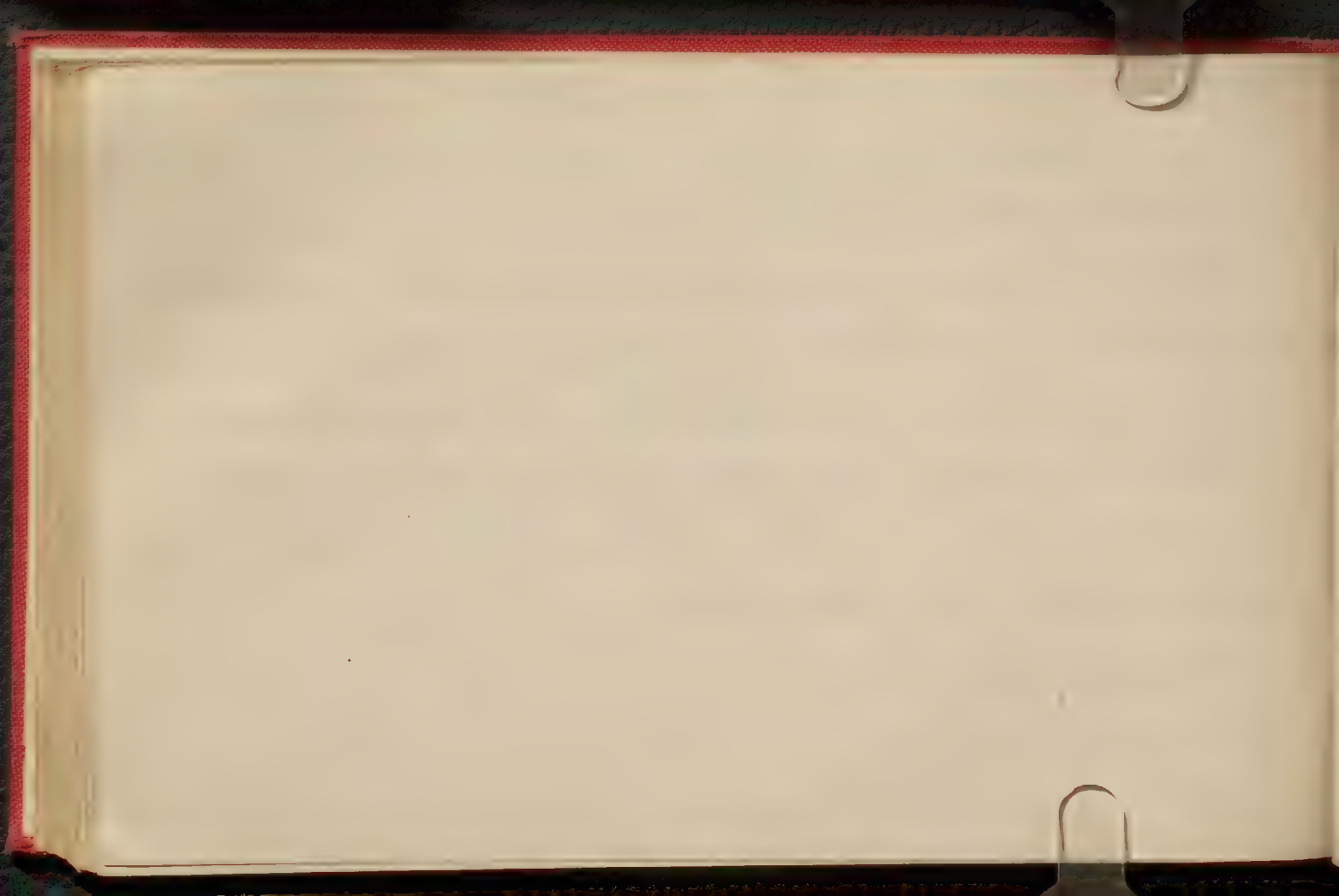


Engelmann (Wilhelm).

Bibliotheca medico-chirurgica et anatomico-physiologica.
Alphabetisches Verzeichniss der medicinischen, chirurgischen,
geburtshülflichen, anatomischen und physiologischen
Bücher, welche vom Jahre 1750 bis zu Ende des Jahres
1867 in Deutschland erschienen sind.

2 v. VIII, 754, 340 pp. 8°.

Leipzig, W. Engelmann, 1848-68.



Catalogue raisonné of the Medical Library
of the Pennsylvania Hospital. By Emil
Fischer, M.D. Printed by order of the Board
of Managers.

xxvii, 750 pp. 8°.
Philadelphia, T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1857.



France

Bibliothèque ^{nationale} impériale. Département
des imprimés. Catalogue des sciences
médicales.

v. 1. III, 794 pp., 1 l. 4°.

Paris, Didot frères, 1857.



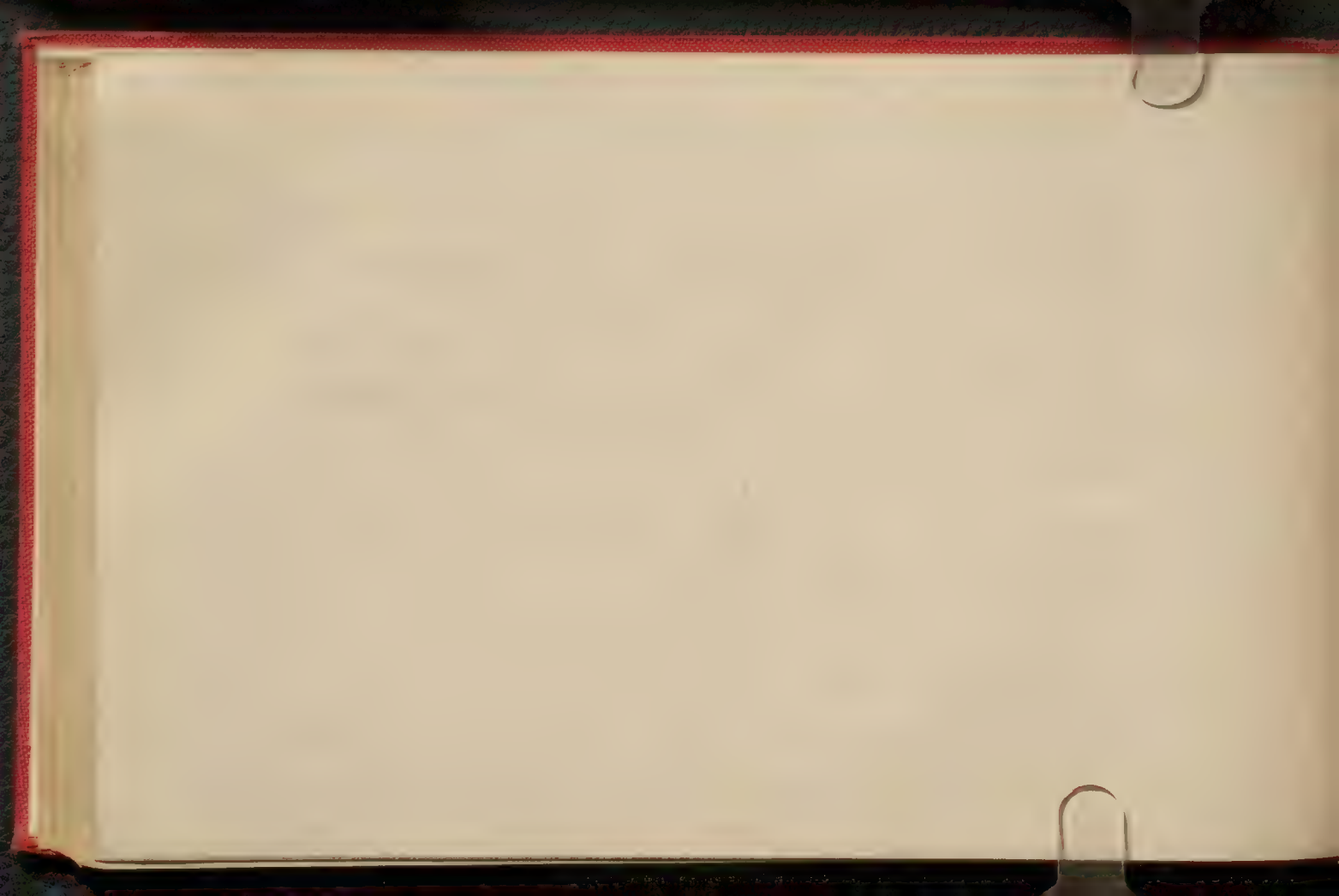
Catalogue of the Library of the Royal
College of Physicians of Edinburgh.
XXVII, 764 pp. 4°.
Edinburgh, R. and R. Clark, 1863.



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Nouveau dictionnaire de médecine et de
chirurgie pratique. Rédigé par Anger,
Baillly [et al.] Directeur de la rédaction, le
docteur Jaccoud.

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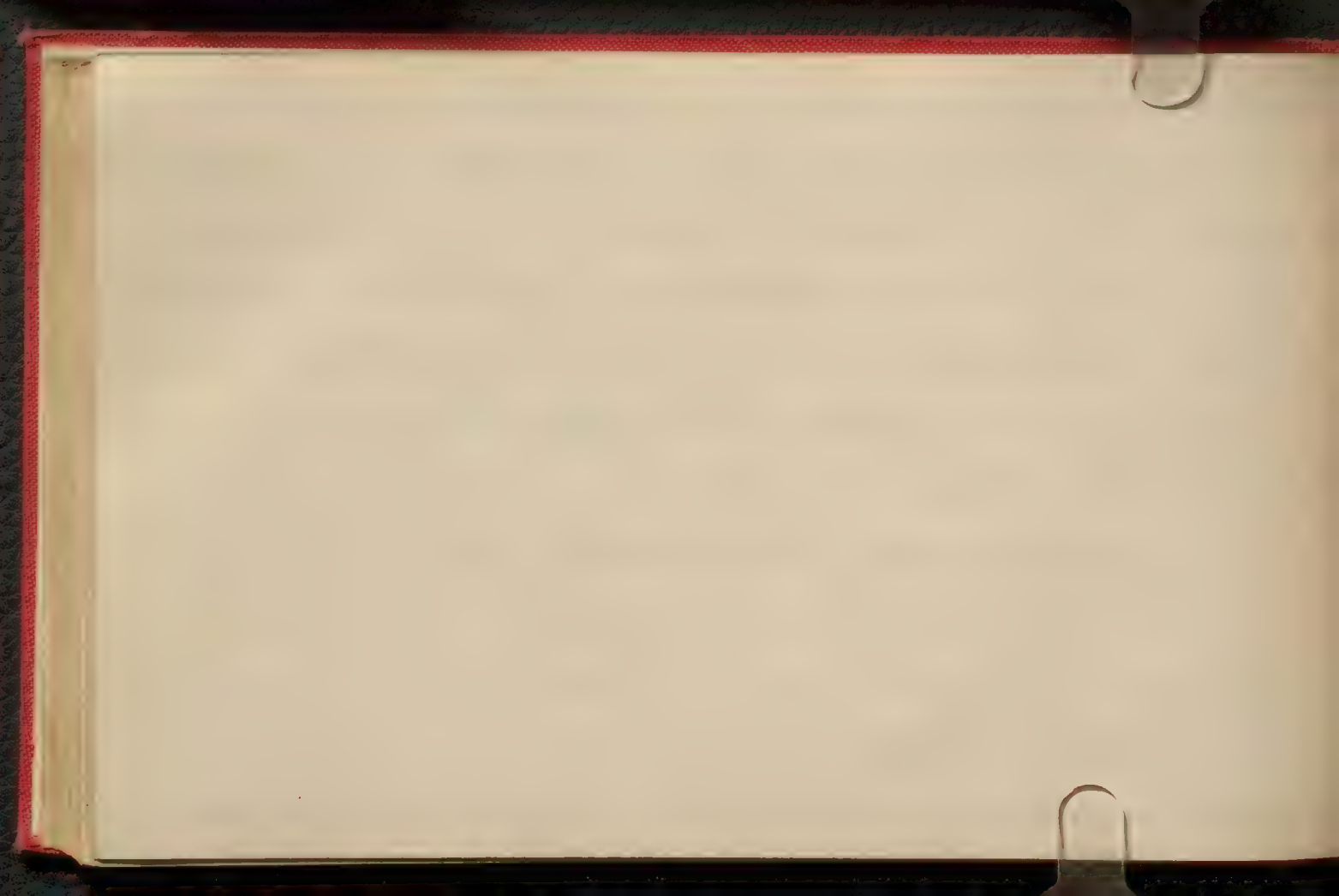
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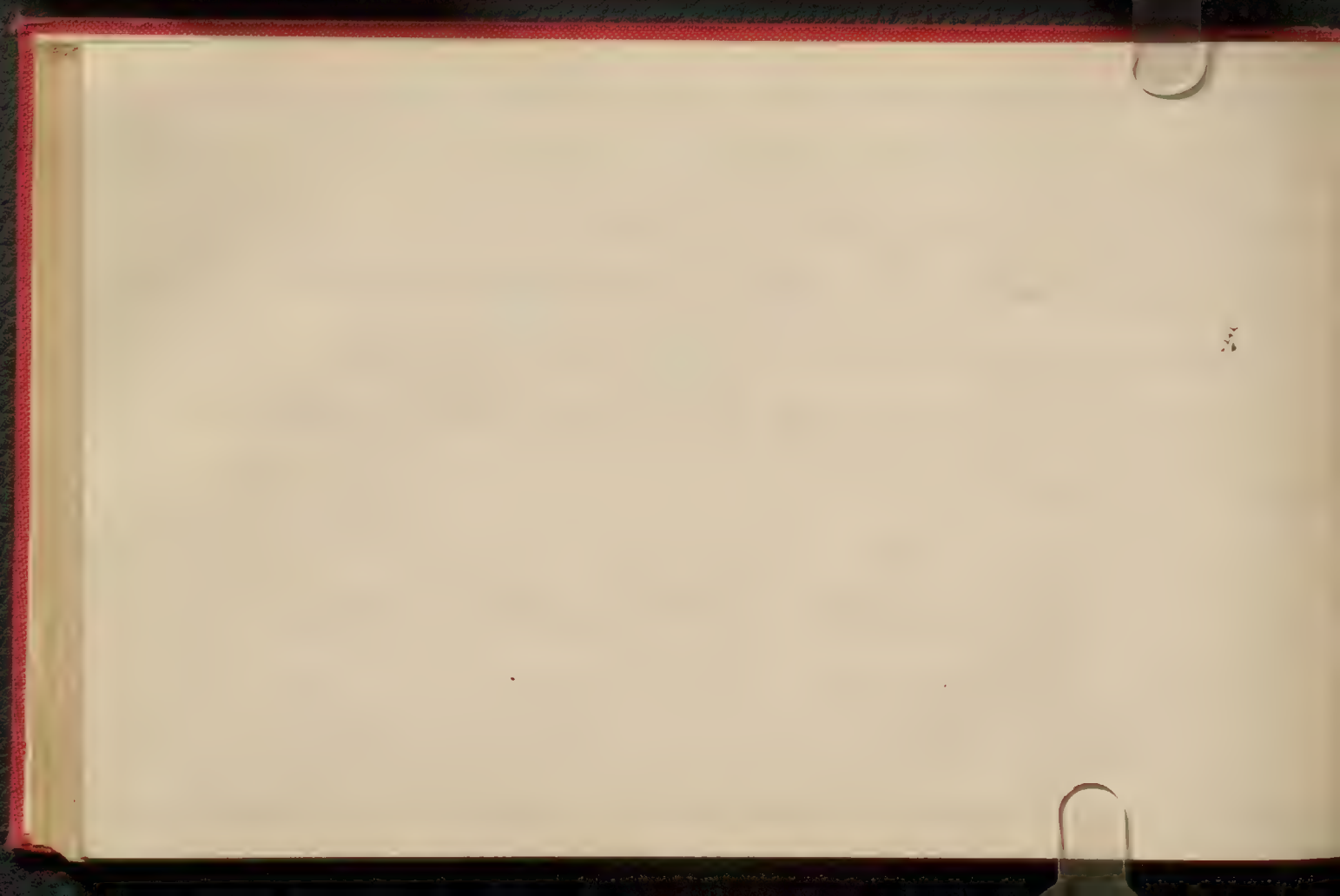
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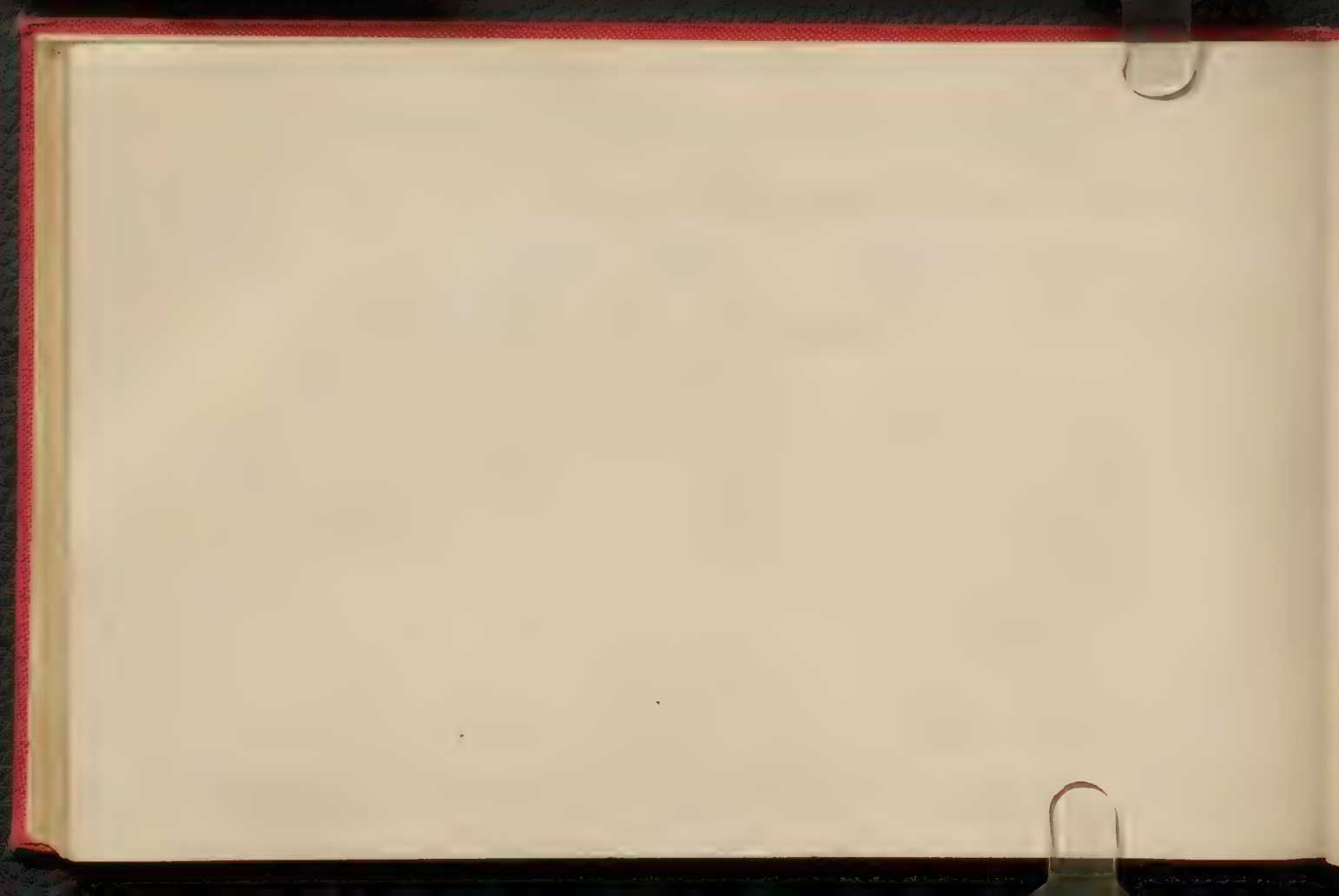
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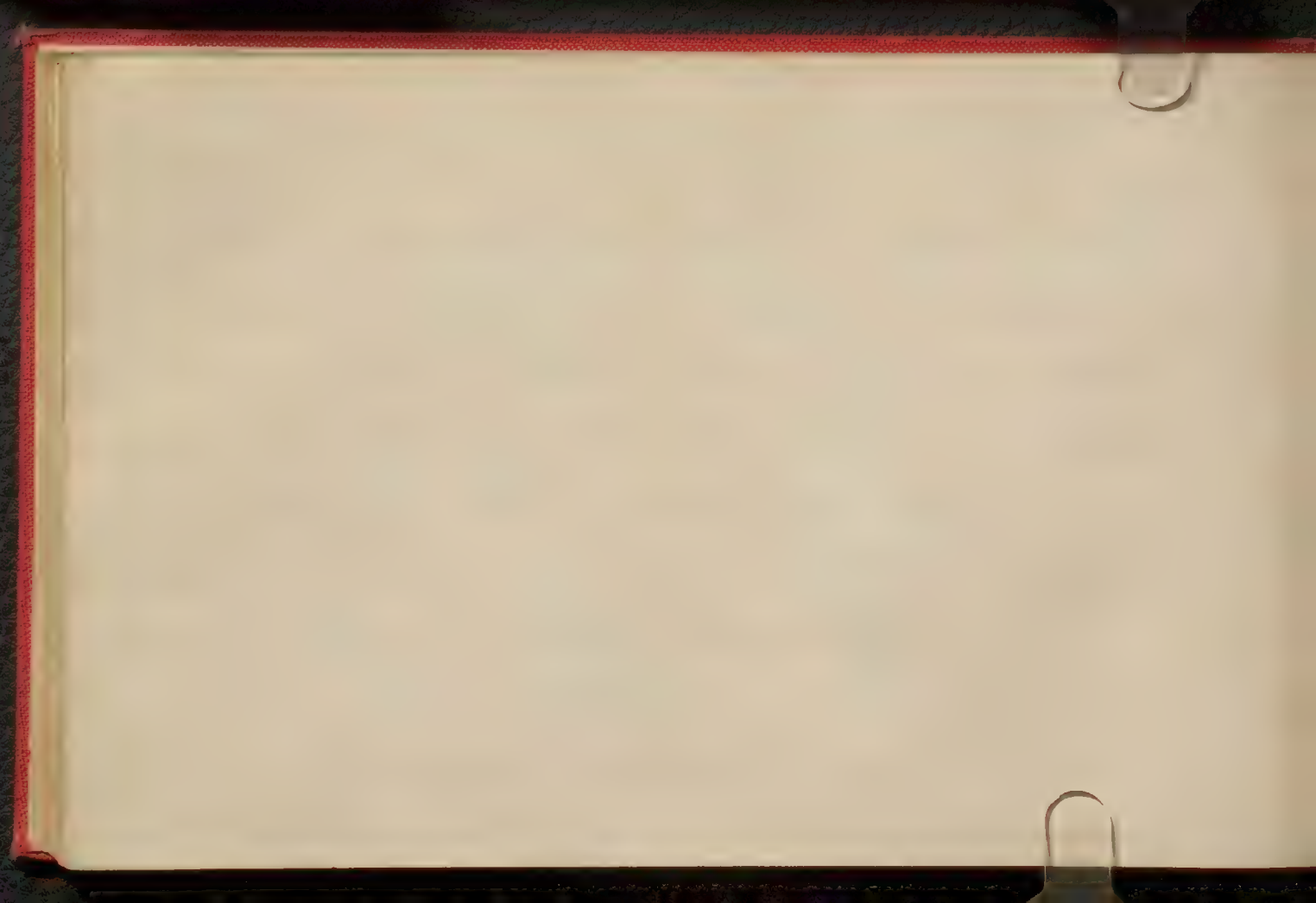
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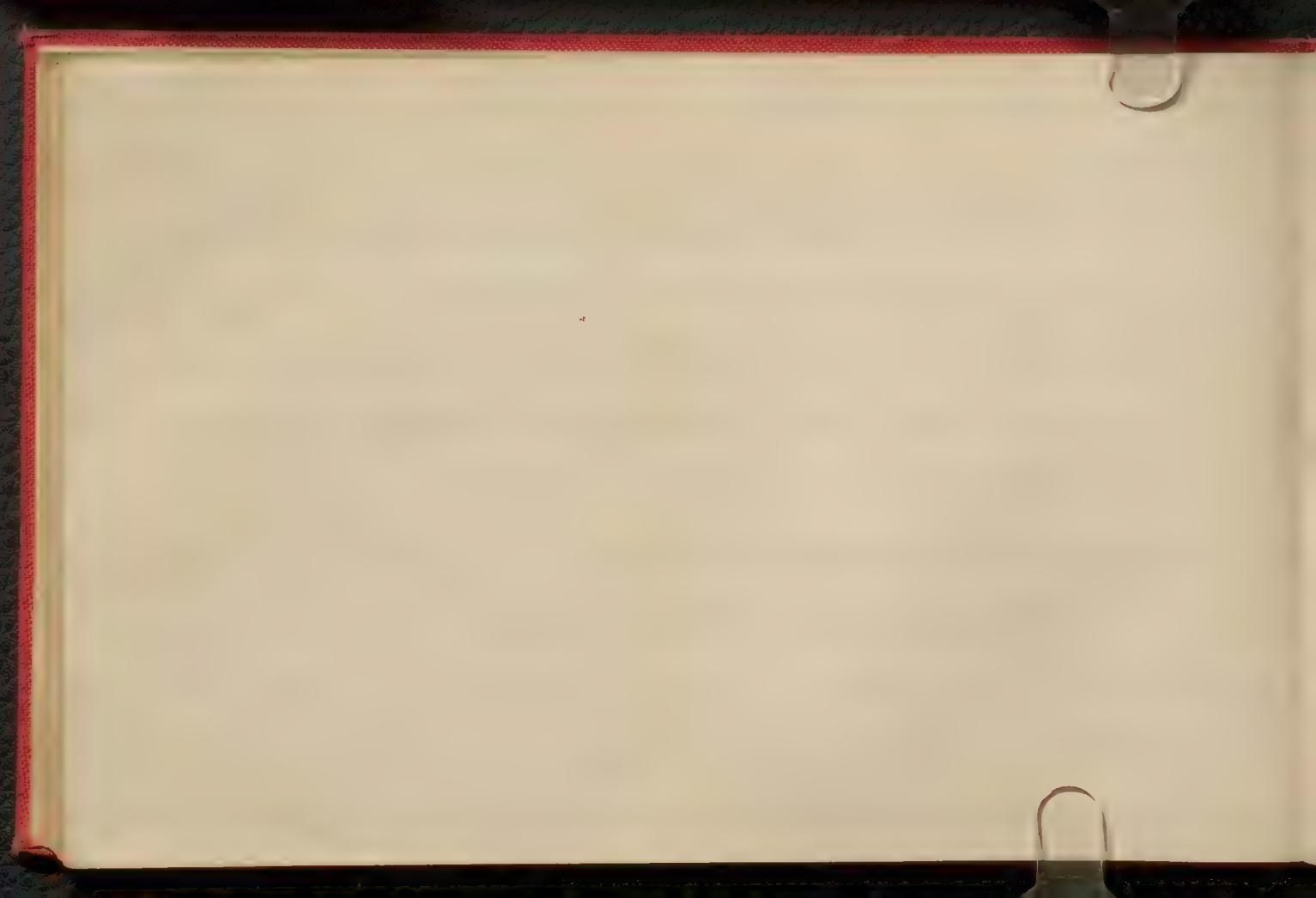
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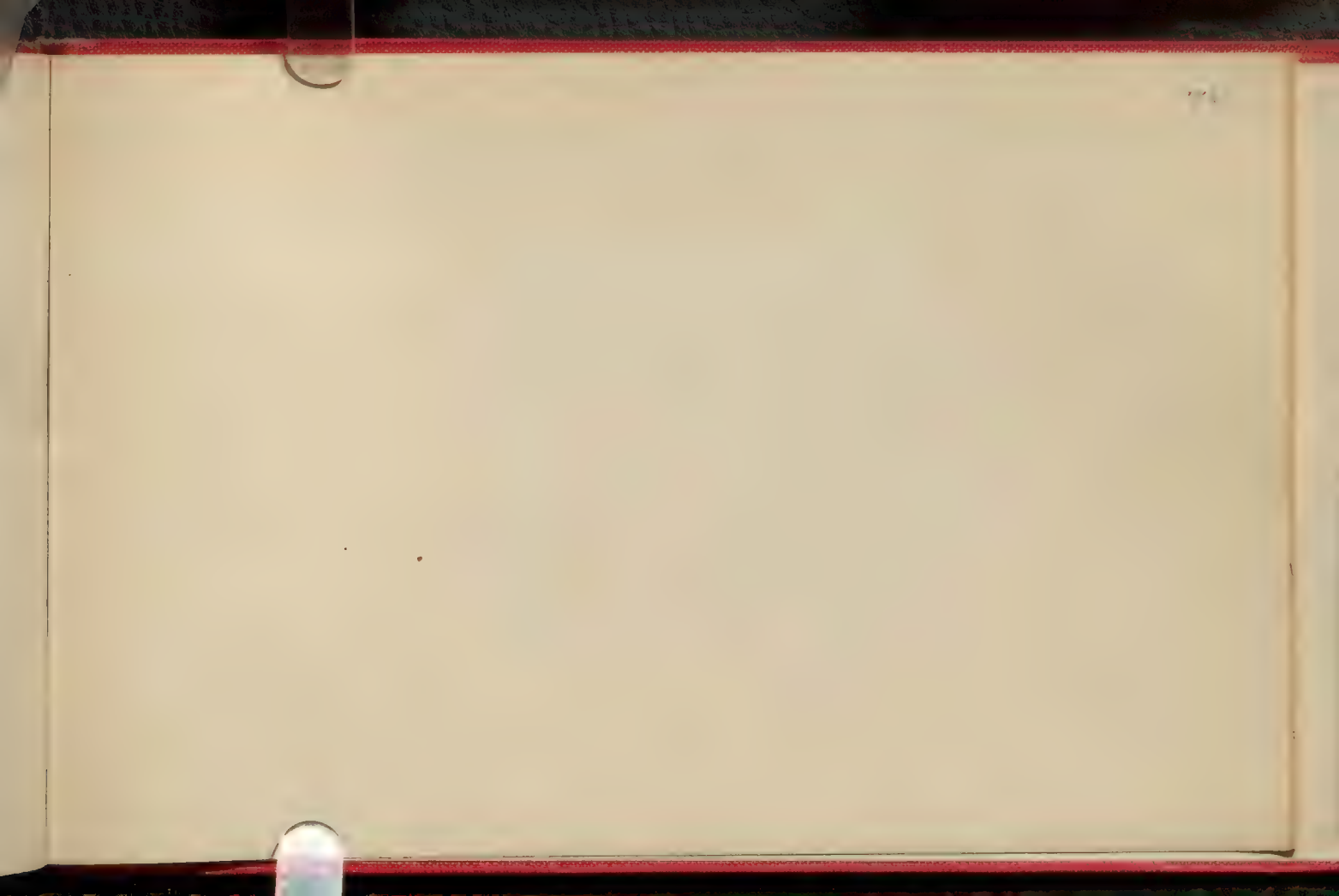


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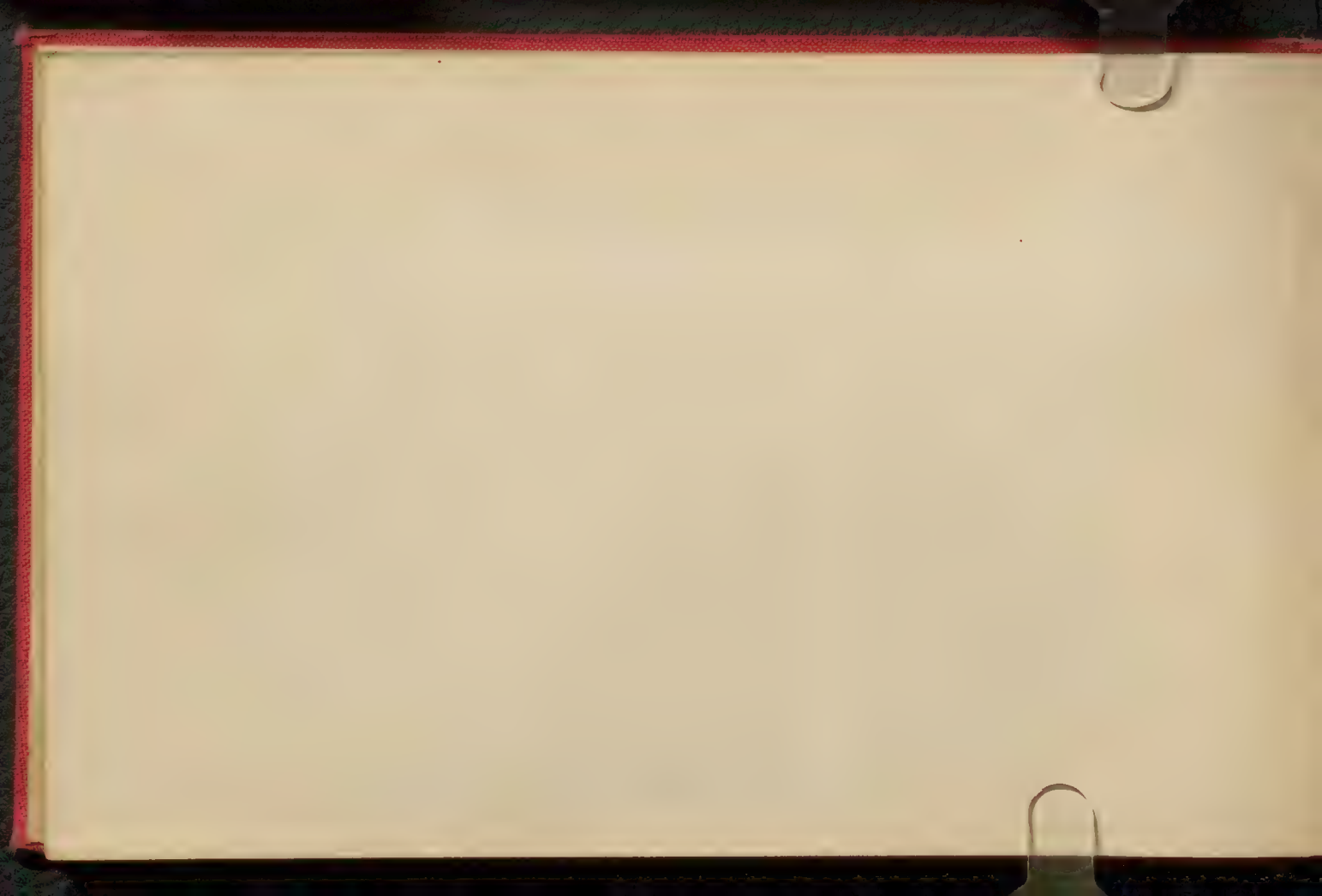
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When I promised to speak briefly at this meeting on Medical Bibliography it was not because I had anything new to say on this subject; but because it seemed possible that a few remarks might start a discussion by the medical writers and teachers of this association as to the methods which they have found useful and as to what they think can be and should be done here to facilitate this kind of research.

From the days of Galen to the middle of the 17th century bibliographical work was the most important business of the medical teacher. The great

iii (wt)
On literary research in Medicine M.L. 5
with a list of a few books which are
specially useful in such research.

by
John S. Billings M.D.

← *

note

This paper was read by Dr. Billings at one of the early meetings of the Johns Hopkins
Hospital Historical Club. It ~~has~~ not been known how it came into my possession.
W. Osler